

SECRET SOCIETIES

AND

SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENTS

by

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CHRISTIAN BOOK CLUB OF AMERICA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The Chevalier de Boufflers

The French Revolution

World Revolution

The Socialist Network

The Surrender of an Empire

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette: Before the Revolution

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette: During the Revolution

Spacious Days

"There is in Italy a power which we seldom mention in this House ... I mean the secret societies.... It is useless to deny, because it is impossible to conceal, that a great part of Europe—the whole of Italy and France and a great portion of Germany, to say nothing of other countries—is covered with a network of these secret societies, just as the superficies of the earth is now being covered with railroads. And what are their objects? They do not attempt to conceal them. They do not want constitutional government; they do not want ameliorated institutions

... they want to change the tenure of land, to drive out the present owners of the soil and to put an end to ecclesiastical establishments. Some of them may go further...." (DISRAELI in the House of Commons, July 14, 1856.)

PREFACE

It is a matter of some regret to me that I have been so far unable to continue the series of studies on the French Revolution of which *The Chevalier de Boufflers* and *The French Revolution, a Study in Democracy* formed the first two volumes. But the state of the world at the end of the Great War seemed to demand an enquiry into the present phase of the revolutionary movement, hence my attempt to follow its course up to modern times in *World Revolution*. And now before returning to that first cataclysm I have felt impelled to devote one more book to the Revolution as a whole by going this time further back into the past and attempting to trace its origins from the first century of the Christian era. For it is only by taking a general survey of the movement that it is possible to understand the causes of any particular phase of its existence. The French Revolution did not arise merely out of conditions or ideas peculiar to the eighteenth century, nor the Bolshevik Revolution out of political and social conditions in Russia or the teaching of Karl Marx. Both these explosions were produced by forces which, making use of popular suffering and discontent, had long been gathering strength for an onslaught not only on Christianity, but on all social and moral order.

It is of immense significance to notice with what resentment this point of view is met in certain quarters. When I first began to write on revolution a well-known London publisher said to me, "Remember that if you take an anti-revolutionary line you will have the whole literary world against you." This appeared to me extraordinary. Why should the literary world sympathize with a movement which from the French Revolution onwards has always been directed against literature, art, and science, and has openly proclaimed its aim to exalt the manual workers over the intelligentsia? "Writers must be proscribed as the most dangerous enemies of the people," said Robespierre; his colleague Dumas said all clever men should be guillotined. "The system of persecution against men of talents was organized.... They cried out in the sections of Paris, 'Beware of that man for he has written a book!'"¹ Precisely the same policy has been followed in Russia. Under Moderate Socialism in Germany the professors, not the "people," are starving in garrets. Yet the whole press of our country is permeated with subversive influences. Not merely in partisan works, but in manuals of history or literature for use in Schools, Burke is reproached for warning us against the French Revolution and Carlyle's panegyric is applauded. And whilst every slip on the part of an anti-revolutionary writer is seized on by the critics and held up as an example of the whole, the most glaring errors not only of conclusions but of facts pass unchallenged if they happen to be committed by a partisan of the movement. The

principle laid down by Collot d'Herbois still holds good: "Tout est permis pour quiconque agit dans le sens de la révolution."

All this was unknown to me when I first embarked on my work. I knew that French writers of the past had distorted facts to suit their own political views, that a conspiracy of history is still directed by certain influences in the masonic lodges and the Sorbonne; I did not know that this conspiracy was being carried on in this country. Therefore the publisher's warning did not daunt me. If I was wrong either in my conclusions or facts I was prepared to be challenged. Should not years of laborious historical research meet either with recognition or with reasoned and scholarly refutation? But although my book received a great many generous and appreciative reviews in the press, criticisms which were hostile took a form which I had never anticipated. Not a single honest attempt was made to refute either my *French Revolution* or *World Revolution* by the usual methods of controversy; statements founded on documentary evidence were met with flat contradiction unsupported by a shred of counter evidence. In general the plan adopted was not to disprove, but to discredit by means of flagrant misquotations, by attributing to me views I had never expressed, or even by means of offensive personalities. It will surely be admitted that this method of attack is unparalleled in any other sphere of literary controversy.

It is interesting to notice that precisely the same line was adopted a hundred years ago with regard to Professor Robison and the Abbé Barruel, whose works on the secret causes of the French Revolution created an immense sensation in their day. The legitimate criticisms that might have been made on their work find no place in the diatribes levelled against them; their enemies content themselves merely with calumnies and abuse. A contemporary American writer, Seth Payson, thus describes the methods employed to discredit them:

The testimony of Professor Robison and Abbé Barruel would doubtless have been considered as ample in any case which did not interest the prejudices and passions of men against them. The scurrility and odium with which they have been loaded is perfectly natural, and what the nature of their testimony would have led one to expect. Men will endeavour to invalidate that evidence which tends to unveil their dark designs: and it cannot be expected that those who believe that "the end sanctifies the means" will be very scrupulous as to their measures. Certainly he was not who invented the following character and arbitrarily applied it to Dr. Robison, which might have been applied with as much propriety to any other person in Europe or America. The character here referred to, is taken from the American *Mercury*, printed at Hartford, September 26, 1799, by E. Babcock. In this paper, on the pretended authority of Professor Ebeling, we are told "that Robison had lived too fast for his income, and to supply deficiencies had undertaken to alter a bank bill, that he was detected and fled to France; that having been expelled the

Lodge in Edinburgh, he applied in France for the second grade, but was refused; that he made the same attempt in Germany and afterwards in Russia, but never succeeded; and from this entertained the bitterest hatred to masonry; and after wandering about Europe for two years, by writing to Secretary Dundas, and presenting a copy of his book, which, it was judged, would answer certain purposes of the ministry, the prosecution against him was stopped, the Professor returned in triumph to his country, and now lives upon a handsome pension, instead of suffering the fate of his predecessor Dodd."²

Payson goes on to quote a writer in *The National Intelligencer* of January 1801, who styles himself a "friend to truth" and speaks of Professor Robison as "a man distinguished by abject dependence on a party, by the base crimes of forgery and adultery, and by frequent paroxysms of insanity." Mounier goes further still, and in his pamphlet *De l'influence attribuée aux Philosophes, ... Francs-maçons et ... Illuminés*, etc., inspired by the Illuminatus Bode, quotes a story that Robison suffered from a form of insanity which consisted in his believing that the posterior portion of his body was made of glass!³

In support of all this farrago of nonsense there is of course no foundation of truth; Robison was a well-known savant who lived sane and respected to the end of his days. On his death Watt wrote of him: "He was a man of the clearest head and the most science of anybody I have ever known."⁴ John Playfair, in a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1815, whilst criticizing his *Proofs of a Conspiracy*—though at the same time admitting he had himself never had access to the documents Robison had consulted!—paid the following tribute to his character and erudition:

His range in science was most extensive; he was familiar with the whole circle of the accurate sciences.... Nothing can add to the esteem which they [i.e. "those who were personally acquainted with him"] felt for his talents and worth or to the respect in which they now hold his memory.⁵

Nevertheless, the lies circulated against both Robison and Barruel were not without effect. Thirteen years later we find another American, this time a Freemason, confessing "with shame and grief and indignation" that he had been carried away by "the flood of vituperation poured upon Barruel and Robison during the past thirty years," that the title pages of their works "were fearful to him," and that although "wishing calmly and candidly to investigate the character of Freemasonry he refused for months to open their books." Yet when in 1827 he read them for the first time he was astonished to find that they showed "a manifest tendency towards Freemasonry." Both Barruel and Robison, he now realized, were "learned men, candid men, lovers of their country, who had a reverence for truth and religion. They give the reasons for their opinions, they quote their authorities,

naming the author and page, like honest people; they both had a wish to rescue British Masonry from the condemnation and fellowship of continental Masonry and appear to be sincerely actuated by the desire of doing good by giving their labours to the public."⁶

That the author was right here in his description of Barruel's attitude to Freemasonry is shown by Barruel's own words on the subject:

England above all is full of those upright men, excellent citizens, men of every kind and in every condition of life, who count it an honour to be masons, and who are distinguished from other men only by ties which seem to strengthen those of benevolence and fraternal charity. It is not the fear of offending a nation amongst which I have found a refuge which prompts me to make this exception. Gratitude would prevail with me over all such terrors and I should say in the midst of London: "England is lost, she will not escape the French Revolution if the masonic lodges resemble those I have to unveil. I would even say more: government and all Christianity would long ago have been lost in England if one could suppose its Freemasons to be initiated into the last mysteries of the sect."⁷

In another passage Barruel observes that Masonry in England is "a society composed of good citizens in general whose chief object is to help each other by principles of equality which for them is nothing else but universal fraternity."⁸ And again: "Let us admire it [the wisdom of England] for having known how to make a real source of benefit to the State out of those same mysteries which elsewhere conceal a profound conspiracy against the State and religion."⁹

The only criticism British Freemasons may make on this verdict is that Barruel regards Masonry as a system which originally contained an element of danger that has been eliminated in England whilst they regard it as a system originally innocuous into which a dangerous element was inserted on the Continent. Thus according to the former conception Freemasonry might be compared to one of the brass shell-cases brought back from the battle-fields of France and converted into a flower-pot holder, whilst according to the latter it resembles an innocent brass flower-pot holder which has been used as a receptacle for explosives. The fact is that, as I shall endeavour to show in the course of this book, Freemasonry being a composite system there is some justification for both these theories. In either case it will be seen that Continental Masonry alone stands condemned.

The plan of representing Robison and Barruel as the enemies of British Masonry can therefore only be regarded as a method for discrediting them in the eyes of British Freemasons, and consequently for bringing the latter over to the side of their antagonists. Exactly the same method of attack has been directed against those of us who during the last few years have attempted to warn the world of the

secret forces working to destroy civilization; in my own case even the plan of accusing me of having attacked British Masonry has been adopted without the shadow of a foundation. From the beginning I have always differentiated between British and Grand Orient Masonry, and have numbered high British Masons amongst my friends.

But what is the main charge brought against us? Like Robison and Barruel, we are accused of raising a false alarm, of creating a bogey, or of being the victims of an obsession. Up to a point this is comprehensible. Whilst on the Continent the importance of secret societies is taken as a matter of course and the libraries of foreign capitals teem with books on the question, people in this country really imagine that secret societies are things of the past—articles to this effect appeared quite recently in two leading London newspapers—whilst practically nothing of any value has been written about them in our language during the last hundred years. Hence ideas that are commonplaces on the Continent here appear sensational and extravagant. The mind of the Englishman does not readily accept anything he cannot see or even sometimes anything he can see which is unprecedented in his experience, so that like the West American farmer, confronted for the first time by the sight of a giraffe, his impulse is to cry out angrily: "I don't believe it!"

But whilst making all allowance for honest ignorance and incredulity, it is impossible not to recognize a certain method in the manner in which the cry of "obsession" or "bogey" is raised. For it will be noticed that people who specialize on other subjects are not described as "obsessed." We did not hear, for example, that the late Professor Einstein had Relativity "on the brain" because he wrote and lectured exclusively on this question, nor do we hear it suggested that Mr. Howard Carter is obsessed with the idea of Tutankhamen and that it would be well if he were to set out for the South Pole by way of a change. Again, all those who warn the world concerning eventualities they conceive to be a danger are not accused of creating bogeys. Thus although Lord Roberts was denounced as a scaremonger for urging the country to prepare for defence against a design openly avowed by Germany both in speech and print, and in 1921 the Duke of Northumberland was declared the victim of a delusion for believing in the existence of a plot against the British Empire which had been proclaimed in a thousand revolutionary harangues and pamphlets. People who, without bothering to produce a shred of documentary evidence, had sounded the alarm on the menace of "French Imperialism" and asserted that our former Allies were engaged in building a vast fleet of aeroplanes in order to attack our coasts. They were not held to be either scaremongers or insane. On the contrary, although some of these same people were proved by events to have been completely wrong in their prognostications at the beginning of the Great War, they are still regarded as oracles and sometimes even described as

"thinking for half Europe."

Another instance of this kind may be cited in the case of Mr. John Spargo, author of a small book entitled *The Jew and American Ideals*. On page 37 of this work Mr. Spargo in refuting the accusations brought against the Jews observes:

Belief in widespread conspiracies directed against individuals or the state is probably the commonest form assumed by the human mind when it loses its balance and its sense of proportion.

Yet on page 6 Mr. Spargo declares that when visiting this country in September and October 1920:

I found in England great nation-wide organizations, obviously well financed, devoted to the sinister purpose of creating anti-Jewish feeling and sentiment. I found special articles in influential newspapers devoted to the same evil purpose. I found at at least one journal, obviously well financed again, exclusively devoted to the fostering of suspicion, fear, and hatred against the Jew ... and in the bookstores I discovered a whole library of books devoted to the same end.

It will be seen then that a belief in widespread conspiracies is not always to be regarded as a sign of loss of mental balance, even when these conspiracies remain completely invisible to the general public. For those of us who were in London during the period of Mr. Spargo's visit saw nothing of the things he here describes. Where, we ask, were these "great nation-wide organizations" striving to create anti-Jewish sentiments? What were their names? By whom were they led? It is true, however, that there were nation-wide organizations in existence here at this date instituted for the purpose of combating Bolshevism. Is anti-Bolshevism then synonymous with "anti-Semitism"?¹⁰ This is the conclusion to which one is inevitably led. For it will be noticed that anyone who attempts to expose the secret forces behind the revolutionary movement, whether he mentions Jews in this connexion or even if he goes out of his way to exonerate them, will incur the hostility of the Jews and their friends and will still be described as "anti-Semite." The realization of this fact has led me particularly to include the Jews in the study of secret societies.

The object of the present book is therefore to carry further the enquiry I began in *World Revolution*, by tracing the course of revolutionary ideas through secret societies from the earliest times, indicating the rôle of the Jews only where it is to be clearly detected, but not seeking to implicate them where good evidence is not forthcoming. For this reason I shall not base assertions on merely "anti-Semite" works, but principally on the writings of the Jews themselves. In the same way with regard to secret societies I shall rely as far as possible on the documents and

admissions of their members, on which point I have been able to collect a great deal of fresh data entirely corroborating my former thesis. It should be understood that I do not propose to give a complete history of secret societies, but only of secret societies in their relation to the revolutionary movement. I shall therefore not attempt to describe the theories of occultism nor to enquire into the secrets of Freemasonry, but simply to relate the history of these systems in order to show the manner in which they have been utilized for a subversive purpose. If I then fail to convince the incredulous that secret forces of revolution exist, it will not be for want of evidence.

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CONTENTS

Preface

PART I *THE PAST*

- I. THE ANCIENT SECRET TRADITION
- II. THE REVOLT AGAINST ISLAM
- III. THE TEMPLARS
- IV. THREE CENTURIES OF OCCULTISM
- V. THE ORIGINS OF FREEMASONRY
- VI. THE GRAND LODGE ERA
- VII. GERMAN TEMPLARISM AND FRENCH ILLUMINISM
- VIII. THE JEWISH CABALISTS
- IX. THE BAVARIAN ILLUMINATI
- X. THE CLIMAX

PART II *THE PRESENT*

- XI. MODERN FREEMASONRY
- XII. SECRET SOCIETIES IN ENGLAND
- XIII. OPEN SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENTS
- XIV. PAN-GERMANISM
- XV. THE REAL JEWISH PERIL

CONCLUSION

APPENDIX:

- I. JEWISH EVIDENCE ON THE TALMUD
- II. THE "PROTOCOLS" OF THE ELDERS OF ZION

INDEX

PART I

THE PAST

1. THE ANCIENT SECRET TRADITION

The East is the cradle of secret societies. For whatever end they may have been employed, the inspiration and methods of most of those mysterious associations which have played so important a part behind the scenes of the world's history will be found to have emanated from the lands where the first recorded acts of the great human drama were played out—Egypt, Babylon, Syria, and Persia. On the one hand Eastern mysticism, on the other Oriental love of intrigue, framed the systems later on to be transported to the West with results so tremendous and far-reaching.

In the study of secret societies we have then a double line to follow—the course of associations enveloping themselves in secrecy for the pursuit of esoteric knowledge, and those using mystery and secrecy for an ulterior and, usually, a political purpose.

But esotericism again presents a dual aspect. Here, as in every phase of earthly life, there is the *revers de la médaille*—white and black, light and darkness, the Heaven and Hell of the human mind. The quest for hidden knowledge may end with initiation into divine truths or into dark and abominable cults. Who knows with what forces he may be brought in contact beyond the veil? Initiation which leads to making use of spiritual forces, whether good or evil, is therefore capable of raising man to greater heights or of degrading him to lower depths than he could ever have reached by remaining on the purely physical plane. And when men thus unite themselves in associations, a collective force is generated which may exercise

immense influence over the world around. Hence the importance of secret societies.

Let it be said once and for all, secret societies have not always been formed for evil purposes. On the contrary, many have arisen from the highest aspirations of the human mind—the desire for a knowledge of eternal verities. The evil arising from such systems has usually consisted in the perversion of principles that once were pure and holy. If I do not insist further on this point, it is because a vast literature has already been devoted to the subject, so that it need only be touched on briefly here.

Now, from the earliest times groups of Initiates or "Wise Men" have existed, claiming to be in possession of esoteric doctrines known as the "Mysteries," incapable of apprehension by the vulgar, and relating to the origin and end of man, the life of the soul after death, and the nature of God or the gods. It is this exclusive attitude which constitutes the essential difference between the Initiates of the ancient world and the great Teachers of religion with whom modern occultists seek to confound them. For whilst religious leaders such as Buddha and Mohammed sought for divine knowledge in order that they might impart it to the world, the Initiates believed that sacred mysteries should not be revealed to the profane but should remain exclusively in their own keeping, although the desire for initiation might spring from the highest aspiration, the gratification, whether real or imaginary, of this desire often led to spiritual arrogance and abominable tyranny, resulting in the fearful trials, the tortures physical and mental, ending even at times in death, to which the neophyte was subjected by his superiors.

THE MYSTERIES

According to a theory current in occult and masonic circles, certain ideas were common to all the more important "Mysteries," thus forming a continuous tradition handed down through succeeding groups of Initiates of different ages and countries. Amongst these ideas is said to have been the conception of the unity of God. Whilst to the multitude it was deemed advisable to preach polytheism, since only in this manner could the plural aspects of the Divine be apprehended by the multitude, the Initiates themselves believed in the existence of one Supreme Being, the Creator of the Universe, pervading and governing all things, Le Plongeon, whose object is to show an affinity between the sacred Mysteries of the Mayas and of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Greeks, asserts that "The idea of a sole and omnipotent Deity, who created all things, seems to have been the universal belief in early ages, amongst all the nations that had reached a high degree of civilization. This was the doctrine of the Egyptian priests."¹¹ The same writer goes on to say that the "doctrine of a Supreme Deity composed of three parts distinct from each other, yet forming one, was universally prevalent among the civilized nations of America,

Asia, and the Egyptians," and that the priests and learned men of Egypt, Chaldea, India, or China "...kept it a profound secret and imparted it only to a few select among those initiated in the sacred mysteries."¹² This view has been expressed by many other writers, yet lacks historical proof.

That monotheism existed in Egypt before the days of Moses is, however, certain. Adolf Erman asserts that "even in early times the educated class" believed all the deities of the Egyptian religion to be identical and that "the priests did not shut their eyes to this doctrine, but strove to grasp the idea of the one God, divided into different persons by poesy and myth.... The priesthood, however, had not the courage to take the final step, to do away with those distinctions which they declared to be immaterial, and to adore the one God under the one name."¹³ It was left to Amenhotep IV, later known as Ikhnaton, to proclaim this doctrine openly to the people. Professor Breasted has described the hymns of praise to the Sun God which Ikhnaton himself wrote on the walls of the Amarna tomb-chapels:

They show us the simplicity and beauty of the young king's faith in the sole God. He had gained the belief that one God created not only all the lower creatures but also all races of men, both Egyptians and foreigners. Moreover, the king saw in his God a kindly Father, who maintained all his creatures by his goodness.... In all the progress of men which we have followed through thousands of years, no one had ever before caught such a vision of the great Father of all.¹⁴

May not the reason why Ikhnaton was later described as a "heretic" be that he violated the code of the priestly hierarchy by revealing this secret doctrine to the profane? Hence, too, perhaps the necessity in which the King found himself of suppressing the priesthood, which by persisting in its exclusive attitude kept what he perceived to be the truth from the minds of the people.

The earliest European centre of the Mysteries appears to have been Greece, where the Eleusinian Mysteries existed at a very early date. Pythagoras, who was born in Samos about 582 B.C., spent some years in Egypt, where he was initiated into the Mysteries of Isis. After his return to Greece, Pythagoras is said to have been initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries and attempted to found a secret society in Samos; but this proving unsuccessful, he journeyed on to Crotona in Italy, where he collected around him a great number of disciples and finally established his sect. This was divided into two classes of Initiates—the first admitted only into the exoteric doctrines of the master, with whom they were not allowed to speak until after a period of five years' probation; the second consisting of the real Initiates, to whom all the mysteries of the esoteric doctrines of Pythagoras were unfolded. This course of instruction, given, after the manner of the Egyptians, by means of images and symbols, began with geometrical science, in which Pythagoras during his stay in Egypt had become an adept, and led up finally to abstruse speculations

concerning the transmigration of the soul and the nature of God, who was represented under the conception of a Universal Mind diffused through all things. It is, however, as the precursor of secret societies formed later in the West of Europe that the sect of Pythagoras enters into the scope of this book. Early masonic tradition traces Freemasonry partly to Pythagoras, who is said to have travelled in England, and there is certainly some reason to believe that his geometrical ideas entered into the system of the operative guilds of masons.

THE JEWISH CABALA¹⁵

According to Fabre d'Olivet, Moses, who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," drew from the Egyptian Mysteries a part of the oral tradition which was handed down through the leaders of the Israelites.¹⁶ That such an oral tradition, distinct from the written word embodied in the Pentateuch, did descend from Moses and that it was later committed to writing in the Talmud and the Cabala is the opinion of many Jewish writers.¹⁷

The first form of the Talmud, called the Mischna, appeared in about the second or third century A.D.; a little later a commentary was added under the name of the Gemara. These two works compose the Jerusalem Talmud, which was revised in the third to the fifth century[A]. This later edition was named the Babylonian Talmud and is the one now in use.

The Talmud relates mainly to the affairs of everyday life—the laws of buying and selling, of making contracts—also to external religious observances, on all of which the most meticulous details are given. As a Jewish writer has expressed it:

... the oddest rabbinical conceits are elaborated through many volumes with the finest dialectic, and the most absurd questions are discussed with the highest efforts of intellectual power; for example, how many white hairs may a red cow have, and yet remain a *red* cow; what sort of scabs require this or that purification; whether a louse or a flea may be killed on the Sabbath—the first being allowed, while the second is a deadly sin; whether the slaughter of an animal ought to be executed at the neck or the tail; whether the high priest put on his shirt or his hose first; whether the *Jabam*, that is, the brother of a man who died childless, being required by law to marry the widow, is relieved from his obligation if he falls off a roof and sticks in the mire.¹⁸

But it is in the Cabala, a Hebrew word signifying "reception," that is to say "a doctrine orally received," that the speculative and philosophical or rather the theosophical doctrines of Israel are to be found. These are contained in two books, the *Sepher Yetzirah* and the *Zohar*.

The *Sepher Yetzirah*, or Book of the Creation, is described by Edersheim as "a monologue on the part of Abraham, in which, by the contemplation of all that is around him, he ultimately arrives at the conclusion of the unity of God"¹⁹; but since this process is accomplished by an arrangement of the Divine Emanations under the name of the Ten Sephiroths, and in the permutation of numerals and of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, it would certainly convey no such idea—nor probably indeed any idea at all—to the mind uninitiated into Cabalistic systems. The *Sepher Yetzirah* is in fact admittedly a work of extraordinary obscurity²⁰ and almost certainly of extreme antiquity. Monsieur Paul Vulliaud, in his exhaustive work on the Cabala recently published,²¹ says that its date has been placed as early as the sixth century before Christ and as late as the tenth century A.D., but that it is at any rate older than the Talmud is shown by the fact that in the Talmud the Rabbis are described as studying it for magical purposes.²² The *Sepher Yetzirah* is also said to be the work referred to in the Koran under the name of the "Book of Abraham."²³

The immense compilation known as the *Sepher-Ha-Zohar*, or Book of Light, is, however, of greater importance to the study of Cabalistic philosophy. According to the Zohar itself, the "Mysteries of Wisdom" were imparted to Adam by God whilst he was still in the Garden of Eden, in the form of a book delivered by the angel Razael. From Adam the book passed on to Seth, then to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham, and later to Moses, one of its principal exponents.²⁴ Other Jewish writers declare, however, that Moses received it for the first time on Mount Sinai and communicated it to the Seventy Elders, by whom it was handed down to David and Solomon, then to Ezra and Nehemiah, and finally to the Rabbis of the early Christian era.²⁵

Until this date the Zohar had remained a purely oral tradition, but now for the first time it is said to have been written down by the disciples of Simon ben Jochai. The Talmud relates that for twelve years the Rabbi Simon and his son Eliezer concealed themselves in a cavern, where, sitting in the sand up to their necks, they meditated on the sacred law and were frequently visited by the prophet Elias.²⁶ In this way, Jewish legend adds, the great book of the Zohar was composed and committed to writing by the Rabbi's son Eliezer and his secretary the Rabbi Abba.²⁷

The first date at which the Zohar is definitely known to have appeared is the end of the thirteenth century, when it was committed to writing by a Spanish Jew, Moses de Leon, who, according to Dr. Ginsburg, said he had discovered and reproduced the original document of Simon ben Jochai; his wife and daughter, however, declared that he had composed it all himself.²⁸ Which is the truth? Jewish opinion is strongly divided on this question, one body maintaining that the Zohar is the comparatively modern work of Moses de Leon, the other declaring it to be of extreme antiquity. M. Vulliaud, who has collated all these views in the course of

some fifty pages, shows that although the name Zohar might have originated with Moses de Leon, the ideas it embodied were far older than the thirteenth century. How, he asks pertinently, would it have been possible for the Rabbis of the Middle Ages to have been deceived into accepting as an ancient document a work that was of completely modern origin?²⁹ Obviously the Zohar was not the composition of Moses de Leon, but a compilation made by him from various documents dating from very early times. Moreover, as M. Vulliaud goes on to explain, those who deny its antiquity are the anti-Cabalists, headed by Graetz, whose object is to prove the Cabala to be at variance with orthodox Judaism. Theodore Reinach goes so far as to declare the Cabala to be "a subtle poison which enters into the veins of Judaism and wholly infests it"; Salomon Reinach calls it "one of the worst aberrations of the human mind."³⁰ This view, many a student of the Cabala will hardly dispute, but to say that it is foreign to Judaism is another matter. The fact is that the main ideas of the Zohar find confirmation in the Talmud. As the *Jewish Encyclopædia* observes, "the Cabala is not really in opposition to the Talmud," and "many Talmudic Jews have supported and contributed to it."³¹ Adolphe Franck does not hesitate to describe it as "the heart and life of Judaism."³² "The greater number of the most eminent Rabbis of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries believed firmly in the sacredness of the Zohar and the infallibility of its teaching."³³

The question of the antiquity of the Cabala is therefore in reality largely a matter of names. That a mystical tradition existed amongst the Jews from remote antiquity will hardly be denied by anyone³⁴; it is therefore, as M. Vulliaud observes, "only a matter of knowing at what moment Jewish mysticism took the name of Cabala."³⁵ Edersheim asserts that—

It is undeniable that, already at the time of Jesus Christ, there existed an assemblage of doctrines and speculations that were carefully concealed from the multitude. They were not even revealed to ordinary scholars, for fear of leading them towards heretical ideas. This kind bore the name of Kabbalah, and as the term (of Kabbalah, to receive, transmit) indicates, it represented the spiritual traditions transmitted from the earliest ages, although mingled in the course of time with impure or foreign elements.³⁶

Is the Cabala, then, as Gougenot des Mousseaux asserts, older than the Jewish race, a legacy handed down from the first patriarchs of the world?³⁷ We must admit this hypothesis to be incapable of proof, yet it is one that has found so much favour with students of occult traditions that it cannot be ignored. The Jewish Cabala itself supports it by tracing its descent from the patriarchs—Adam, Noah, Enoch, and Abraham—who lived before the Jews as a separate race came into existence. Eliphas Lévi accepts this genealogy, and relates that "the Holy Cabala" was the tradition of the children of Seth carried out of Chaldea by Abraham, who was "the

inheritor of the secrets of Enoch and the father of initiation in Israel."³⁸

According to this theory, which we find again propounded by the American Freemason, Dr. Mackey,³⁹ there was, besides the divine Cabala of the children of Seth, the magical Cabala of the children of Cain, which descended to the Sabeists, or star-worshippers, of Chaldea, adepts in astrology and necromancy. Sorcery, as we know, had been practised by the Canaanites before the occupation of Palestine by the Israelites; Egypt India, and Greece also had their soothsayers and diviners. In spite of the imprecations against sorcery contained in the law of Moses, the Jews, disregarding these warnings, caught the contagion and mingled the sacred tradition they had inherited with magical ideas partly borrowed from other races and partly of their own devising. At the same time the speculative side of the Jewish Cabala borrowed from the philosophy of the Persian Magi, of the Neo-Platonists,⁴⁰ and of the Neo-Pythagoreans. There is, then, some justification for the anti-Cabalists' contention that what we know to-day as the Cabala is not of purely Jewish origin.

Gougenot des Mousseaux, who had made a profound study of occultism, asserts that there were therefore two Cabalas: the ancient sacred tradition handed down from the first patriarchs of the human race; and the evil Cabala, wherein this sacred tradition was mingled by the Rabbis with barbaric superstitions, combined with their own imaginings and henceforth marked with their seal.⁴¹ This view also finds expression in the remarkable work of the converted Jew Drach, who refers to —

The ancient and true Cabala, which ... we distinguish from the modern Cabala, false, condemnable, and condemned by the Holy See, the work of the Rabbis, who have also falsified and perverted the Talmudic tradition. The doctors of the Synagogue trace it back to Moses, whilst at the same time admitting that the principal truths it contains were those known by revelation to the first patriarchs of the world.⁴²

Further on Drach quotes the statement of Sixtus of Sienna, another converted Jew and a Dominican, protected by Pius V:

Since by the decree of the Holy Roman Inquisition all books appertaining to the Cabala have lately been condemned, one must know that the Cabala is double; that one is true, the other false. The true and pious one is that which ... elucidates the secret mysteries of the holy law according to the principle of anagogy (i.e. figurative interpretation). This Cabala therefore the Church has never condemned. The false and impious Cabala is a certain mendacious kind of Jewish tradition, full of innumerable vanities and falsehoods, differing but little from necromancy. This kind of superstition, therefore, improperly called Cabala, the Church within the

last few years has deservedly condemned.⁴³

The modern Jewish Cabala presents a dual aspect—theoretical and practical; the former concerned with theosophical speculations, the latter with magical practices. It would be impossible here to give an idea of Cabalistic theosophy with its extraordinary imaginings on the Sephiroths, the attributes and functions of good and bad angels, dissertations on the nature of demons, and minute details on the appearance of God under the name of the Ancient of Ancients, from whose head 400,000 worlds receive the light. "The length of this face from the top of the head is three hundred and seventy times ten thousand worlds. It is called the 'Long Face,' for such is the name of the Ancient of Ancients."⁴⁴ The description of the hair and beard alone belonging to this gigantic countenance occupies a large place in the Zoharic treatise, *Idra Raba*.⁴⁵

According to the Cabala, every letter in the Scriptures contains a mystery only to be solved by the initiated.⁴⁶ By means of this system of interpretation passages of the Old Testament are shown to bear meanings totally unapparent to the ordinary reader. Thus the Zohar explains that Noah was lamed for life by the bite of a lion whilst he was in the ark,⁴⁷ the adventures of Jonah inside the whale are related with an extraordinary wealth of imagination,⁴⁸ whilst the beautiful story of Elisha and the Shunnamite woman is travestied in the most grotesque manner.⁴⁹

In the practical Cabala this method of "decoding" is reduced to a theurgic or magical system in which the healing of diseases plays an important part and is effected by means of the mystical arrangement of numbers and letters, by the pronunciation of the Ineffable Name, by the use of amulets and talismans, or by compounds supposed to contain certain occult properties.

All these ideas derived from very ancient cults; even the art of working miracles by the use of the Divine Name, which after the appropriation of the Cabala by the Jews became the particular practice of Jewish miracle-workers, appears to have originated in Chaldea.⁵⁰ Nor can the insistence on the Chosen People theory, which forms the basis of all Talmudic and Cabalistic writings, be regarded as of purely Jewish origin; the ancient Egyptians likewise believed themselves to be "the peculiar people specially loved by the gods."⁵¹ But in the hands of the Jews this belief became a pretension to the exclusive enjoyment of divine favour. According to the Zohar, "all Israelites will have a part in the future world,"⁵² and on arrival there will not be handed over like the *goyim* (or non-Jewish races) to the hands of the angel Douma and sent down to Hell.⁵³ Indeed the *goyim* are even denied human attributes. Thus the Zohar again explains that the words of the Scripture "Jehovah Elohim made man" mean that He made Israel.⁵⁴ The seventeenth-century Rabbinical treatise *Emek ha Melek* observes: "Our Rabbis of blessed memory have said: 'Ye Jews are men because of the soul ye have from the Supreme

Man (i.e. God). But the nations of the world are not styled men because they have not, from the Holy and Supreme Man, the Neschama (or glorious soul), but they have the Nephesh (soul) from Adam Belial, that is the malicious and unnecessary man, called Sammael, the Supreme Devil."⁵⁵

In conformity with this exclusive attitude towards the rest of the human race, the Messianic idea which forms the dominating theme of the Cabala is made to serve purely Jewish interests. Yet in its origins this idea was possibly not Jewish. It is said by believers in an ancient secret tradition common to other races besides the Jews, that a part of this tradition related to a past Golden Age when man was free from care and evil non-existent, to the subsequent fall of Man and the loss of this primitive felicity, and finally to a revelation received from Heaven foretelling the reparation of this loss and the coming of a Redeemer who should save the world and restore the Golden Age. According to Drach:

The tradition of a Man-God who should present Himself as the teacher and liberator of the fallen human race was constantly taught amongst all the enlightened nations of the globe. *Vetus et constans opinio*, as Suetonius says. It is of all times and of all places.⁵⁶

And Drach goes on to quote the evidence of Volney, who had travelled in the East and declared that—

The sacred and mythological traditions of earlier times had spread throughout all Asia the belief in a great Mediator who was to come, of a future Saviour, King, God, Conqueror, and Legislator who would bring back the Golden Age to earth and deliver men from the empire of evil.⁵⁷

All that can be said with any degree of certainty with regard to this belief is that it did exist amongst the Zoroastrians of Persia as well as amongst the Jews. D'Herbelot, quoting Abulfaraj, shows that five hundred years before Christ, Zerdascht, the leader of the Zoroastrians, predicted the coming of the Messiah, at whose birth a star would appear. He also told his disciples that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, that they would be the first to hear of Him, and that they should bring Him gifts.⁵⁸

Drach believes that this tradition was taught in the ancient synagogue,⁵⁹ thus explaining the words of St. Paul that unto the Jews "were committed the oracles of God"⁶⁰:

This oral doctrine, which is the Cabala, had for its object the most sublime truths of the Faith which it brought back incessantly to the promised Redeemer, the

foundation of the whole system of the ancient tradition.⁶¹

Drach further asserts that the doctrine of the Trinity formed a part of this tradition:

Whoever has familiarized himself with that which was taught by the ancient doctors of the Synagogue, particularly those who lived before the coming of the Saviour, knows that the Trinity in one God was a truth admitted amongst them from the earliest times.⁶²

M. Vulliaud points out that Graetz admits the existence of this idea in the Zohar: "It even taught certain doctrines which appeared favourable to the Christian dogma of the Trinity!" And again: "It is incontestable that the Zohar makes allusions to the beliefs in the Trinity and the Incarnation."⁶³ M. Vulliaud adds: "The idea of the Trinity must therefore play an important part in the Cabala, since it has been possible to affirm that 'the characteristic of the Zohar and its particular conception is its attachment to the principle of the Trinity,'"⁶⁴ and further quotes Edersheim as saying that "a great part of the explanation given in the writings of the Cabalists resembles in a surprising manner the highest truths of Christianity."⁶⁵ It would appear, then, that certain remnants of the ancient secret tradition lingered on in the Cabala. The *Jewish Encyclopædia*, perhaps unintentionally, endorses this opinion, since in deriding the sixteenth-century Christian Cabalists for asserting that the Cabala contained traces of Christianity, it goes on to say that what appears to be Christian in the Cabala is only ancient esoteric doctrine.⁶⁶ Here, then, we have it on the authority of modern Jewish scholars that the ancient secret tradition was in harmony with Christian teaching. But in the teaching of the later synagogue the philosophy of the earlier sages was narrowed down to suit the exclusive system of the Jewish hierarchy, and the ancient hope of a Redeemer who should restore Man to the state of felicity he had lost at the Fall was transformed into the idea of salvation for the Jews alone⁶⁷ under the ægis of a triumphant and even an avenging Messiah.⁶⁸ It is this Messianic dream perpetuated in the modern Cabala which nineteen hundred years ago the advent of Christ on earth came to disturb.

THE COMING OF THE REDEEMER

The fact that many Christian doctrines, such as the conception of a Trinity, the miraculous birth and murder of a Deity, had found a place in earlier religions has frequently been used as an argument to show that the story of Christ was merely a new version of various ancient legends, those of Attis, Adonis, or of Osiris, and that consequently the Christian religion is founded on a myth. The answer to this is that the existence of Christ on earth is an historic fact which no serious authority has ever denied. The attempts of such writers as Drews and J.M. Robertson to

establish the theory of the "Christ-Myth," which find an echo in the utterances of Socialist orators,⁶⁹ have been met with so much able criticism as to need no further refutation. Sir James Frazer, who will certainly not be accused of bigoted orthodoxy, observes in this connexion:

The doubts which have been cast on the historical reality of Jesus are, in my judgement, unworthy of serious attention.... To dissolve the founder of Christianity into a myth, as some would do, is hardly less absurd than it would be to do the same for Mohammed, Luther, and Calvin.⁷⁰

May not the fact that certain circumstances in the life of Christ were foreshadowed by earlier religions indicate, as Eliphaz Lévi observes, that the ancients had an intuition of Christian mysteries?⁷¹

To those therefore who had adhered to the ancient tradition, Christ appeared as the fulfilment of a prophecy as old as the world. Thus the wise men came from afar to worship the Babe of Bethlehem, and when they saw His star in the East they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. In Christ they hailed not only Him who was born King of the Jews, but the Saviour of the whole human race.⁷²

In the light of this great hope, that wondrous night in Bethlehem is seen in all its sublimity. Throughout the ages the seers had looked for the coming of the Redeemer, and lo! He was here; but it was not to the mighty in Israel, to the High Priests and the Scribes, that His birth was announced, but to humble shepherds watching their flocks by night. And these men of simple faith, hearing from the angels "the good tidings of great joy" that a Saviour, "Christ the Lord" was born, went with haste to see the babe lying in the manger, and returned "glorifying and praising God." So also to the devout in Israel, to Simeon and to Anna the prophetess, the great event appeared in its universal significance, and Simeon, departing in peace, knew that his eyes had seen the salvation that was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as the glory of the people of Israel.

But to the Jews, in whose hands the ancient tradition had been turned to the exclusive advantage of the Jewish race, to the Rabbis, who had, moreover, constituted themselves the sole guardians within this nation of the said tradition, the manner of its fulfilment was necessarily abhorrent. Instead of a resplendent Messiah who should be presented by them to the people, a Saviour was born amongst the people themselves and brought to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord; a Saviour moreover who, as time went on, imparted His divine message to the poor and humble and declared that His Kingdom was not of this world. This was clearly what Mary meant when she said that God had "scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts," that He had "put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." Christ was therefore doubly hateful to the

Jewish hierarchy in that He attacked the privilege of the race to which they belonged by throwing open the door to all mankind, and the privilege of the caste to which they belonged by revealing sacred doctrines to the profane and destroying their claim to exclusive knowledge.

Unless viewed from this aspect, neither the antagonism displayed by the Scribes and Pharisees towards our Lord nor the denunciations He uttered against them can be properly understood. "Woe unto you, Lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.... Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." What did Christ mean by the key of knowledge? Clearly the sacred tradition which, as Drach explains, foreshadowed the doctrines of Christianity.⁷³ It was the Rabbis who perverted that tradition, and thus "the guilt of these perfidious Doctors consisted in their concealing from the people the traditional explanation of the sacred books by means of which they would have been able to recognize the Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ."⁷⁴ Many of the people, however, did recognize Him; indeed, the multitude acclaimed Him, spreading their garments before Him and crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Writers who have cited the choice of Barabbas in the place of Christ as an instance of misguided popular judgement, overlook the fact that this choice was not spontaneous; it was the Chief Priests who delivered Christ "from envy" and who "moved the people that Pilate should rather release unto them Barabbas." *Then* the people obediently cried out, "Crucify Him!"

So also it was the Rabbis who, after hiding from the people the meaning of the sacred tradition at the moment of its fulfilment, afterwards poisoned that same stream for future generations. Abominable calumnies on Christ and Christianity occur not only in the Cabala but in the earlier editions of the Talmud. In these, says Barclay—

Our Lord and Saviour is "that one," "such a one," "a fool," "the leper," "the deceiver of Israel," etc. Efforts are made to prove that He is the son of Joseph Pandira before his marriage with Mary. His miracles are attributed to sorcery, the secret of which He brought in a slit in His flesh out of Egypt. He is said to have been first stoned and then hanged on the eve of the Passover. His disciples are called heretics and opprobrious names. They are accused of immoral practices, and the New Testament is called a sinful book. The references to these subjects manifest the most bitter aversion and hatred.⁷⁵

One might look in vain for passages such as these in English or French translations of the Talmud, for the reason that no complete translation exists in these

languages. This fact is of great significance. Whilst the sacred books of every other important religion have been rendered into our own tongue and are open to everyone to study, the book that forms the foundation of modern Judaism is closed to the general public. We can read English translations of the Koran, of the Dhammapada, of the Sutta Nipata, of the Zend Avesta, of the Shu King, of the Laws of Manu, of the Bhagavadgita, but we cannot read the Talmud. In the long series of Sacred Books of the East the Talmud finds no place. All that is accessible to the ordinary reader consists, on one hand, in expurgated versions or judicious selections by Jewish and pro-Jewish compilers, and, on the other hand, in "anti-Semitic" publications on which it would be dangerous to place reliance. The principal English translation by Rodkinson is very incomplete, and the folios are nowhere indicated, so that it is impossible to look up a passage.⁷⁶ The French translation by Jean de Pauly[B] professes to present the entire text of the Venetian Talmud of 1520, but it does nothing of the kind.⁷⁷ The translator, in the Preface, in fact admits that he has left out "sterile discussions" and has throughout attempted to tone down "the brutality of certain expressions which offend our ears." This of course affords him infinite latitude, so that all passages likely to prove displeasing to the "Hébraisants," to whom his work is particularly dedicated, are discreetly expunged. Jean de Pauly's translation of the Cabala appears, however, to be complete.⁷⁸ But a fair and honest rendering of the whole Talmud into English or French still remains to be made.

Moreover, even the Hebrew scholar is obliged to exercise some discrimination if he desires to consult the Talmud in its original form. For by the sixteenth century, when the study of Hebrew became general amongst Christians, the antisocial and anti-Christian tendencies of the Talmud attracted the attention of the Censor, and in the Bâle Talmud of 1581 the most obnoxious passages and the entire treatise Abodah Zara were suppressed.⁷⁹

In the Cracow edition of 1604 that followed, these passages were restored by the Jews, a proceeding which aroused so much indignation amongst Christian students of Hebrew that the Jews became alarmed. Accordingly a Jewish synod, assembled in Poland in 1631, ordered the offending passages to be expunged again, but—according to Drach—to be replaced by circles which the Rabbis were to fill in orally when giving instruction to young Jews.⁸⁰ After that date the Talmud was for a time carefully bowdlerized, so that in order to discover its original form it is advisable to go back to the Venetian Talmud of 1520 before any omissions were made, or to consult a modern edition. For now that the Jews no longer fear the Christians, these passages are all said to have been replaced and no attempt is made, as in the Middle Ages, to prove that they do not refer to the Founder of Christianity.⁸¹

Thus the *Jewish Encyclopædia* admits that Jewish legends concerning Jesus are

found in the Talmud and Midrash and in "the life of Jesus (Toledot Yeshu) that originated in the Middle Ages. It is the tendency of all these sources to belittle the person of Jesus by ascribing to Him illegitimate birth, magic, and a shameful death."⁸²

The last work mentioned, the *Toledot Yeshu*, or the *Sepher Toldos Jeschu*, described here as originating in the Middle Ages, probably belongs in reality to a much earlier period. Eliphas Lévi asserts that "the Sepher Toldos, to which the Jews attribute a great antiquity and which they hid from the Christians with such precautions that this book was for a long while unfindable, is quoted for the first time by Raymond Martin of the Order of the Preaching Brothers towards the end of the thirteenth century.... This book was evidently written by a Rabbi initiated into the mysteries of the Cabala."⁸³ Whether then the Toledot Yeshu had existed for many centuries before it was first brought to light or whether it was a collection of Jewish traditions woven into a coherent narrative by a thirteenth-century Rabbi, the ideas it contains can be traced back at least as far as the second century of the Christian era. Origen, who in the middle of the third century wrote his reply to the attack of Celsus on Christianity, refers to a scandalous story closely resembling the Toledot Yeshu, which Celsus, who lived towards the end of the second century, had quoted on the authority of a Jew.⁸⁴ It is evident, therefore, that the legend it contains had long been current in Jewish circles, but the book itself did not come into the hands of Christians until it was translated into Latin by Raymond Martin. Later on Luther summarized it in German under the name of *Schem Hamphorasch*; Wagenseil in 1681 and Huldreich in 1705 published Latin translations.⁸⁵ It is also to be found in French in Gustave Brunei's *Evangeliles Apocryphes*.

However repugnant it is to transcribe any portion of this blasphemous work, its main outline must be given here in order to trace the subsequent course of the anti-Christian secret tradition in which, as we shall see, it has been perpetuated up to our own day. Briefly, then, the Toledot Yeshu relates with the most indecent details that Miriam, a hairdresser of Bethlehem,⁸⁶ affianced to a young man named Jochanan, was seduced by a libertine, Joseph Panther or Pandira, and gave birth to a son whom she named Johosuah or Jeschu. According to the Talmudic authors of the Sota and the Sanhedrim, Jeschu was taken during his boyhood to Egypt, where he was initiated into the secret doctrines of the priests, and on his return to Palestine gave himself up to the practice of magic.⁸⁷ The Toledot Yeshu, however, goes on to say that on reaching manhood Jeschu learnt the secret of his illegitimacy, on account of which he was driven out of the Synagogue and took refuge for a time in Galilee. Now, there was in the Temple a stone on which was engraved the Tetragrammaton or Schem Hamphorasch, that is to say, the Ineffable Name of God; this stone had been found by King David when the foundations of the Temple were being prepared and was deposited by him in the Holy of Holies.

Jeschu, knowing this, came from Galilee and, penetrating into the Holy of Holies, read the Ineffable Name, which he transcribed on to a piece of parchment and concealed in an incision under his skin. By this means he was able to work miracles and to persuade the people that he was the son of God foretold by Isaiah. With the aid of Judas, the Sages of the Synagogue succeeded in capturing Jeschu, who was then led before the Great and Little Sanhedrim, by whom he was condemned to be stoned to death and finally hanged.

Such is the story of Christ according to the Jewish Cabalists, which should be compared not only with the Christian tradition but with that of the Moslems. It is perhaps not sufficiently known that the Koran, whilst denying the divinity of Christ and also the fact of His crucifixion,⁸⁸ nevertheless indignantly denounces the infamous legends concerning Him perpetuated by the Jews, and confirms in beautiful language the story of the Annunciation and the doctrine of the Miraculous Conception.⁸⁹ "Remember when the angels said, 'O Mary! verily hath God chosen thee and purified thee, and chosen thee above the women of the worlds.' ... Remember when the angels said, 'O Mary! verily God announceth to thee the Word from Him: His name shall be Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, illustrious in this world, and in the next, and one of those who have near access to God.'"

The Mother of Jesus is shown to have been pure and to have "kept her maidenhood"⁹⁰; it was the Jews who spoke against Mary "a grievous calumny."⁹¹ Jesus Himself is described as "strengthened with the Holy Spirit," and the Jews are reproached for rejecting "the Apostle of God,"⁹² to whom was given "the Evangel with its guidance and light confirmatory of the preceding Law."⁹³

Thus during the centuries that saw the birth of Christianity, although other non-Christian forces arrayed themselves against the new faith, it was left to the Jews to inaugurate a campaign of vilification against the person of its Founder, whom Moslems to this day revere as one of the great teachers of the world.⁹⁴

THE ESSENES

A subtler device for discrediting Christianity and undermining belief in the divine character of our Lord has been adopted by modern writers, principally Jewish, who set out to prove that He belonged to the sect of the Essenes, a community of ascetics holding all goods in common, which had existed in Palestine before the birth of Christ. Thus the Jewish historian Graetz declares that Jesus simply appropriated to himself the essential features of Essenism, and that primitive Christianity was "nothing but an offshoot of Essenism."⁹⁵ The Christian Jew Dr. Ginsburg partially endorses this view in a small pamphlet⁹⁶ containing most of the evidence that has been brought forward on the subject, and himself expresses the

opinion that "it will hardly be doubted that our Saviour Himself belonged to this holy brotherhood."⁹⁷ So after representing Christ as a magician in the Toledot Yeshu and the Talmud, Jewish tradition seeks to explain His miraculous works as those of a mere healer—an idea that we shall find descending right through the secret societies to this day. Of course if this were true, if the miracles of Christ were simply due to a knowledge of natural laws and His doctrines were the outcome of a sect, the whole theory of His divine power and mission falls to the ground. This is why it is essential to expose the fallacies and even the bad faith on which the attempt to identify Him with the Essenes is based.

Now, we have only to study the Gospels carefully in order to realize that the teachings of Christ were totally different from those peculiar to the Essenes.⁹⁸ Christ did not live in a fraternity, but, as Dr. Ginsburg himself points out, associated with publicans and sinners. The Essenes did not frequent the Temple and Christ was there frequently. The Essenes disapproved of wine and marriage, whilst Christ sanctioned marriage by His presence at the wedding of Cana in Galilee and there turned water into wine. A further point, the most conclusive of all, Dr. Ginsburg ignores, namely, that one of the principal traits of the Essenes which distinguished them from the other Jewish sects of their day was their disapproval of ointment, which they regarded as defiling, whilst Christ not only commended the woman who brought the precious jar of ointment, but reproached Simon for the omission: "My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment." It is obvious that if Christ had been an Essene but had departed from His usual custom on this occasion out of deference to the woman's feelings, he would have understood why Simon had not offered Him the same attention, and at any rate Simon would have excused himself on these grounds. Further, if His disciples had been Essenes, would they not have protested against this violation of their principles, instead of merely objecting that the ointment was of too costly a kind?

But it is in attributing to Christ the Communistic doctrines of the Essenes that Dr. Ginsburg's conclusions are the most misleading—a point of particular importance in view of the fact that it is on this false hypothesis that so-called "Christian Socialism" has been built up. "The Essenes," he writes, "had all things in common, and appointed one of the brethren as steward to manage the common bag; so the primitive Christians (Acts ii. 44, 45, iv. 32-4; John xii. 6, xiii. 29)." It is perfectly true that, as the first reference to the Acts testifies, some of the primitive Christians after the death of Christ formed themselves into a body having all things in common, but there is not the slightest evidence that Christ and His disciples followed this principle. The solitary passages in the Gospel of St. John, which are all that Dr. Ginsburg can quote in support of this contention, may have referred to an alms-bag or a fund for certain expenses, not to a common pool of all monetary wealth. Still less is there any evidence that Christ advocated Communism to the

world in general. When the young man having great possessions asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, Christ told him to follow the commandments, but on the young man asking what more he could do, answered: "If thou wilt be perfect go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor." Renunciation—but not the pooling—of all wealth was thus a counsel of perfection for the few who desired to devote their lives to God, as monks and nuns have always done, and bore no relation to the Communistic system of the Essenes.

Dr. Ginsburg goes on to say: "Essenism put all its members on the same level, forbidding the exercise of authority of one over the other and enjoining mutual service; so Christ (Matt. xx. 25-8; Mark ix. 35-7, x. 42-5). Essenism commanded its disciples to call no man master upon the earth; so Christ (Matt. xxiii. 8-10)." As a matter of fact, Christ strongly upheld the exercise of authority, not only in the oft-quoted passage, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," but in His approval of the Centurion's speech: "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." Everywhere Christ commends the faithful servant and enjoins obedience to masters. If we look up the reference to the Gospel of St. Matthew where Dr. Ginsburg says that Christ commanded His disciples to call no man master on earth, we shall find that he has not only perverted the sense of the passage but reversed the order of the words, which, following on a denunciation of the Jewish Rabbis, runs thus: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.... Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." The apostles were therefore, never ordered to call no man master, but not to be called master themselves. Moreover, if we refer to the Greek text, we shall see that this was meant in a spiritual and not a social sense. The word for "master" here given is in the first verse διδάσκαλος, i.e. teacher, in the second, καθηγητής literally guide, and the word for servant is διακόνος. When masters and servants in the social sense are referred to in the Gospels, the word employed for master is κύριος and for servant δοῦλος. Dr. Ginsburg should have been aware of this distinction and that the passage in question had therefore no bearing on his argument. As a matter of fact it would appear that some of the apostles kept servants, since Christ commends them for exacting strict attention to duty:

Which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded to him? I trow not.⁹⁹

This passage would alone suffice to show that Christ and His apostles did not

inhabit communities where all were equal, but followed the usual practices of the social system under which they lived, though adopting certain rules, such as taking only one garment and carrying no money when they went on journeys. Those resemblances between the teaching of the Essenes and the Sermon on the Mount which Dr. Ginsburg indicates refer not to the customs of a sect, but to general precepts for human conduct—humility, meekness, charity, and so forth.

At the same time it is clear that if the Essenes in general conformed to some of the principles laid down by Christ, certain of their doctrines were completely at variance with those of Christ and of primitive Christians, in particular their custom of praying to the rising sun and their disbelief in the resurrection of the body.¹⁰⁰ St. Paul denounces asceticism, the cardinal doctrine of the Essenes, in unmeasured terms, warning the brethren that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, ... forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving ... If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ."

This would suggest that certain Essenean ideas had crept into Christian communities and were regarded by those who remembered Christ's true teaching as a dangerous perversion.

The Essenes were therefore not Christians, but a secret society, practising four degrees of initiation, and bound by terrible oaths not to divulge the sacred mysteries confided to them. And what were those mysteries but those of the Jewish secret tradition which we now know as the Cabala? Dr. Ginsburg throws an important light on Essenism when, in one passage alone, he refers to the obligation of the Essenes "not to divulge the secret doctrines to anyone, ... carefully to preserve the books belonging to their sect and the names of the angels or the mysteries connected with the Tetragrammaton and the other names of God and the angels, comprised in the theosophy as well as with the cosmogony which also played so important a part among the Jewish mystics and the Kabbalists."¹⁰¹ The truth is clearly that the Essenes were Cabalists, though doubtless Cabalists of a superior kind. The Cabal they possessed very possibly descended from pre-Christian times and had remained uncontaminated by the anti-Christian strain introduced into it by the Rabbis after the death of Christ.¹⁰²

The Essenes are of importance to the subject of this book as the first of the secret societies from which a direct line of tradition can be traced up to the present day. But if in this peaceful community no actually anti-Christian influence is to be discerned, the same cannot be said of the succeeding pseudo-Christian sects

which, whilst professing Christianity, mingled with Christian doctrines the poison of the perverted Cabala, main source of the errors which henceforth rent the Christian Church in twain.

THE GNOSTICS

The first school of thought to create a schism in Christianity was the collection of sects known under the generic name of Gnosticism. In its purer forms Gnosticism aimed at supplementing faith by knowledge of eternal verities and at giving a wider meaning to Christianity by linking it up with earlier faiths. "The belief that the divinity had been manifested in the religious institutions of all nations"¹⁰³ thus led to the conception of a sort of universal religion containing the divine elements of all.

Gnosticism, however, as the *Jewish Encyclopædia* points out, "was Jewish in character long before it became Christian."¹⁰⁴ M. Matter indicates Syria and Palestine as its cradle and Alexandria as the centre by which it was influenced at the time of its alliance with Christianity. This influence again was predominantly Jewish. Philo and Aristobulus, the leading Jewish philosophers of Alexandria, "wholly attached to the ancient religion of their fathers, both resolved to adorn it with the spoils of other systems and to open to Judaism the way to immense conquests."¹⁰⁵ This method of borrowing from other races and religions those ideas useful for their purpose has always been the custom of the Jews. The Cabala, as we have seen, was made up of these heterogeneous elements. And it is here we find the principal progenitor of Gnosticism. The Freemason Ragon gives the clue in the words: "The Cabala is the key of the occult sciences. The Gnostics were born of the Cabalists."¹⁰⁶

For the Cabala was much older than the Gnostics. Modern historians who date it merely from the publication of the Zohar by Moses de Leon in the thirteenth century or from the school of Luria in the sixteenth century obscure this most important fact which Jewish savants have always clearly, recognized.¹⁰⁷ The *Jewish Encyclopædia*, whilst denying the certainty of connexion between Gnosticism and the Cabala, nevertheless admits that the investigations of the anti-Cabalist Graetz "must be resumed on a new basis," and it goes on to show that "it was Alexandria of the first century, or earlier, with her strange commingling of Egyptian, Chaldean, Judean, and Greek culture which furnished soil and seeds for that mystic philosophy."¹⁰⁸ But since Alexandria was at the same period the home of Gnosticism, which was formed from the same elements enumerated here, the connexion between the two systems is clearly evident. M. Matter is therefore right in saying that Gnosticism was not a defection from Christianity, but a combination of systems into which a few Christian elements were introduced. The result of Gnosticism was thus not to christianize the Cabala, but to cabalize Christianity by

mingling its pure and simple teaching with theosophy and even magic. The *Jewish Encyclopædia* quotes the opinion that "the central doctrine of Gnosticism—a movement closely connected with Jewish mysticism—was nothing else than the attempt to liberate the soul and unite it with God"; but as this was apparently to be effected "through the employment of mysteries, incantations, names of angels," etc., it will be seen how widely even this phase of Gnosticism differs from Christianity and identifies itself with the magical Cabala of the Jews.

Indeed, the man generally recognized as the founder of Gnosticism, a Jew commonly known as Simon Magus, was not only a Cabalist mystic but avowedly a magician, who with a band of Jews, including his master Dositheus and his disciples Menander and Cerinthus, instituted a priesthood of the Mysteries and practised occult arts and exorcisms.¹⁰⁹ It was this Simon of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles that he "bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God," and who sought to purchase the power of the laying on of hands with money. Simon, indeed, crazed by his incantations and ecstasies, developed megalomania in an acute form, arrogating to himself divine honours and aspiring to the adoration of the whole world. According to a contemporary legend, he eventually became sorcerer to Nero and ended his life in Rome.¹¹⁰

The prevalence of sorcery amongst the Jews during the first century of the Christian era is shown by other passages in the Acts of the Apostles; in Paphos the "false prophet," a Jew, whose surname was Bar-Jesus, otherwise known as "Elymas the sorcerer," opposed the teaching of St. Paul and brought on himself the imprecation: "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

Perversion is the keynote of all the debased forms of Gnosticism. According to Eliphas Lévi, certain of the Gnostics introduced into their rites that profanation of Christian mysteries which was to form the basis of black magic in the Middle Ages.¹¹¹ The glorification of evil, which plays so important a part in the modern revolutionary movement, constituted the creed of the Ophites, who worshipped the Serpent (ὄφις) because he had revolted against Jehovah, to whom they referred under the Cabalistic term of the "demiurgus,"¹¹² and still more of the Cainites, so-called from their cult of Cain, whom, with Dathan and Abiram, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and finally Judas Iscariot, they regarded as noble victims of the demiurgus.¹¹³ Animated by hatred of all social and moral order, the Cainites "called upon all men to destroy the works of God and to commit every kind of infamy."¹¹⁴

These men were therefore not only the enemies of Christianity but of orthodox Judaism, since it was against the Jehovah of the Jews that their hatred was particularly directed. Another Gnostic sect, the Carpocratians, followers of Carpocrates of Alexandria and his son Epiphanus—who died from his debaucheries and was venerated as a god¹¹⁵—likewise regarded all written laws, Christian or Mosaic, with contempt and recognized only the γνῶσις or knowledge given to the great men of every nation—Plato and Pythagoras, Moses and Christ—which "frees one from all that the vulgar call religion" and "makes man equal to God."¹¹⁶

So in the Carpocratians of the second century we find already the tendency towards that *deification of humanity* which forms the supreme doctrine of the secret societies and of the visionary Socialists of our day. The war now begins between the two contending principles: the Christian conception of man reaching up to God and the secret society conception of man as God, needing no revelation from on high and no guidance but the law of his own nature. And since that nature is in itself divine, all that springs from it is praiseworthy, and those acts usually regarded as sins are not to be condemned. By this line of reasoning the Carpocratians arrived at much the same conclusions as modern Communists with regard to the ideal social system. Thus Epiphanus held that since Nature herself reveals the principle of the community and the unity of all things, human laws which are contrary to this law of Nature are so many culpable infractions of the legitimate order of things. Before these laws were imposed on humanity everything was in common—land, goods, and women. According to certain contemporaries, the Carpocratians returned to this primitive system by instituting the community of women and indulging in every kind of licence.

The further Gnostic sect of Antitacts, following this same cult of human nature, taught revolt against all positive religion and laws and the necessity for gratifying the flesh; the Adamites of North Africa, going a step further in the return to Nature, cast off all clothing at their religious services so as to represent the primitive innocence of the garden of Eden—a precedent followed by the Adamites of Germany in the fifteenth century.¹¹⁷

These Gnostics, says Eliphas Lévi, under the pretext of "spiritualizing matter, materialized the spirit in the most revolting ways.... Rebels to the hierarchic order, ... they wished to substitute the mystical licence of sensual passions to wise Christian sobriety and obedience to laws.... Enemies of the family, they wished to produce sterility by increasing debauchery."¹¹⁸

By way of systematically perverting the doctrines of the Christian faith the Gnostics claimed to possess the true versions of the Gospels, and professed belief in these to the exclusion of all the others.¹¹⁹ Thus the Ebionites had their own

corrupted version of the Gospel of St. Matthew founded on the "Gospel of the Hebrews," known earlier to the Jewish Christians; the Marcosians had their version of St. Luke, the Cainites their own "Gospel of Judas," and the Valentinians their "Gospel of St. John." As we shall see later, the Gospel of St. John is the one that throughout the war on Christianity has been specially chosen for the purpose of perversion.

Of course this spirit of perversion was nothing new; many centuries earlier the prophet Isaiah had denounced it in the words: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness!" But the role of the Gnostics was to reduce perversion to a system by binding men together into sects working under the guise of enlightenment in order to obscure all recognized ideas of morality and religion. It is this which constitutes their importance in the history of secret societies.

Whether the Gnostics themselves can be described as a secret society, or rather as a ramification of secret societies, is open to question. M. Matter, quoting a number of third-century writers, shows the possibility that they had mysteries and initiations; the Church Fathers definitely asserted this to be the case.¹²⁰ According to Tertullian, the Valentinians continued, or rather perverted, the mysteries of Eleusis, out of which they made a "sanctuary of prostitution."¹²¹

The Valentinians are known to have divided their members into three classes—the Pneumatics, the Psychics, and the Hylics (i.e. materialists); the Basilideans are also said to have possessed secret doctrines known to hardly one in a thousand of the sect. From all this M. Matter concludes that:

1. The Gnostics professed to hold by means of tradition a secret doctrine superior to that contained in the public writings of the apostles.
2. That they did not communicate this doctrine to everyone....
3. That they communicated it by means of emblems and symbols, as the Diagram of the Ophites proves.
4. That in these communications they imitated the rites and trials of the mysteries of Eleusis.¹²²

This claim to the possession of a secret oral tradition, whether known under the name of γνῶσις or of Cabala, confirms the conception of the Gnostics as Cabalists and shows how far they had departed from Christian teaching. For if only in this idea of "one doctrine for the ignorant and another for the initiated," the Gnostics had restored the very system which Christianity had come to destroy.¹²³

MANICHEISM

Whilst we have seen the Gnostic sects working for more or less subversive purposes under the guise of esoteric doctrines, we find in the Manicheans of Persia, who followed a century later, a sect embodying the same tendencies and approaching still nearer to secret society organization.

Cubricus or Corbicius, the founder of Manicheism, was born in Babylonia about the year A.D. 216. Whilst still a child he is said to have been bought as a slave by a rich widow of Ctesiphon, who liberated him and on her death left him great wealth. According to another story—for the whole history of Manes rests on legends—he inherited from a rich old woman the books of a Saracen named Scythianus on the wisdom of the Egyptians. Combining the doctrines these books contained with ideas borrowed from Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism, and Christianity, and also with certain additions of his own, he elaborated a philosophic system which he proceeded to teach. Cubricus then changed his name to Mani or Manes and proclaimed himself the Paraclete promised by Jesus Christ. His followers were divided into two classes—the outer circle of hearers or combatants, and the inner circle of teachers or ascetics described as the Elect. As evidence of their resemblance with Freemasons, it has been said that the Manicheans made use of secret signs, grips, and passwords, that owing to the circumstances of their master's adoption they called Manes "the son of the widow" and themselves "the children of the widow," but this is not clearly proved. One of their customs is, however, interesting in this connexion. According to legend, Manes undertook to cure the son of the King of Persia who had fallen ill, but the prince died, whereupon Manes was flayed alive by order of the king and his corpse hanged up at the city gate. Every year after this, on Good Friday, the Manicheans carried out a mourning ceremony known as the Bema around the catafalque of Manes, whose real sufferings they were wont to contrast with the unreal sufferings of Christ.

The fundamental doctrine of Manicheism is Dualism—that is to say, the existence of two opposing principles in the world, light and darkness, good and evil—founded, however, not on the Christian conception of this idea, but on the Zoroastrian conception of Ormuzd and Ahriman, and so perverted and mingled with Cabalistic superstitions that it met with as vehement denunciation by Persian priests as by Christian Fathers. Thus, according to the doctrine of Manes, all matter is absolute evil, the principle of evil is eternal, humanity itself is of Satanic origin, and the first human beings, Adam and Eve, are represented as the offspring of devils.¹²⁴ Much the same idea may be found in the Jewish Cabala, where it is said that Adam, after other abominable practices, cohabited with female devils whilst Eve consoled herself with male devils, so that whole races of demons were born into the world. Eve is also accused of cohabiting with the Serpent.¹²⁵ In the Yalkut Shimoni it is also related that during the 130 years that Adam lived apart from Eve, "he begat a generation of devils, spirits, and hobgoblins."¹²⁶ Manichean demonology thus paved the way for the placation of the powers of darkness

practised by the Euchites at the end of the fourth century and later by the Paulicians, the Bogomils, and the Luciferians.

So it is in Gnosticism and Manicheism that we find evidence of the first attempts to pervert Christianity. The very fact that all such have been condemned by the Church as "heresies" has tended to enlist sympathy in their favour, yet even Eliphas Lévi recognizes that here the action of the Church was right, for the "monstrous gnosis of Manes" was a desecration not only of Christian doctrines but of pre-Christian sacred traditions.

2. THE REVOLT AGAINST ISLAM¹²⁷

We have followed the efforts of subversive sects hitherto directed against Christianity and orthodox Judaism; we shall now see this attempt, reduced by gradual stages to a working system of extraordinary efficiency, organized for the purpose of undermining all moral and religious beliefs in the minds of Moslems. In the middle of the seventh century an immense schism was created in Islam by the rival advocates of successors to the Prophet, the orthodox Islamites known by the name of Sunnis adhering to the elected Khalifas Abu Bakr, Omar, and Othman, whilst the party of revolt, known as the Shiahs, claimed the Khalifate for the descendants of Mohammed through Ali, son of Abu-Talib and husband of Fatima, the Prophet's daughter. This division ended in open warfare; Ali was finally assassinated, his elder son Hason was poisoned in Medina, his younger son Husain fell at the battle of Kerbela fighting against the supporters of Othman. The deaths of Hasan and Husain are still mourned yearly by the Shiahs at the Moharram.

THE ISMAILIS

The Shiahs themselves split again over the question of Ali's successors into four factions, the fourth of which divided again into two further sects. Both of these retained their allegiance to the descendants of Ali as far as Jafar-as-Sadik, but whilst one party, known as the Imamias or Isna-Asharias (i.e. the Twelvers), supported the succession through his younger son Musa to the twelfth Iman Mohammed, son of Askeri, the Ismailis (or Seveners) adhered to Ismail, the elder son of Jafar-as-Sadik.

CHOICE OF SUNNIS

Abu Bakr (1st Khalifa) 632
Omar 634
Othman 644
Ali

CHOICE OF SHIAHS

Abd-ul-Muttalib
Abdullah
MOHAMMED A.D. 570-632
Fatima married Ali
Abu Tālib
ALI (4th Sunni and 1st Shiah Khalifa murdered in Kufa)
(2) Hasan poisoned A.D. 680
(3) Husain killed at battle of Kerbela A.D. 680
(4) Ali II
(5) Mohammed
(6) Jafar-as-Sadik
Choice of ISMAILIS
(7) Ismail
Mohammed disappeared circ. 770
Choice of IMAMIAS or ISNA-ASHARIAS
(7) Abu'I Hasan Musa
(8) Ali III
(9) Abu Jafar Mohammed
(10) Ali
(11) Abu Mohammed al Askari
(12) Mohammed al Mahdi

SHIAHS

ISMAILIS circ. A.D. 770
BATINIS (founded by Abdullah ibn Maymūn) circ. A.D. 872
FATIMITES (under Ubeidallah 1st Fatimite Khalifa) A.D. 909
Fatimite Khalifas of Egypt A.D. 977
HAKIM 6th Fatimite Khalifa A.D. 996
Founds Dar-ul-Hikmat A.D. 1004
ASSASSINS (under Hasan Saba) A.D. 1090
DRUSES (under Hazza) circ. A.D. 1021
KARMATHITES (under Hamdan Karmath) A.D. 896

THE SUCCESSORS OF THE PROPHET

The above table shows the rival lines of Khalifas—on the left the elected successors, choice of the Sunnis; on the right the lineal descendants, choice of the Shiahs. The figure at the side of each name indicates the number in succession of the Khalifa mentioned. The table inset shows the sects to which the disputes over the succession gave birth.

So far, however, in spite of divisions, no body of Shiahs had ever deviated from the fundamental doctrines of Islamism, but merely claimed that these had been handed down through a different line from that recognized by the Sunnis. The earliest Ismailis, who formed themselves into a party at about the time of the death of Mohammed, son of Ismail (i.e. circ. A.D. 770), still remained believers, declaring only that the true teaching of the Prophet had descended to Mohammed, who was not dead but would return in the fullness of time and that he was the Mahdi whom Moslems must await. But in about A.D. 873 an intriguer of extraordinary subtlety succeeded in capturing the movement, which, hitherto merely schismatic, now became definitely subversive, not only of Islamism, but of all religious belief.

This man, Abdullah ibn Maymūn, the son of a learned and free-thinking doctor in Southern Persia, brought up in the doctrines of Gnostic Dualism and profoundly versed in all religions, was in reality, like his father, a pure materialist. By professing adherence to the creed of orthodox Shi-ism, and proclaiming a knowledge of the mystic doctrines which the Ismailis believed to have descended through Ismail to his son Mohammed, Abdullah succeeded in placing himself at the head of the Ismailis.

His advocacy of Ismail was thus merely a mask, his real aim being materialism, which he now proceeded to make into a system by founding a sect known as the Batinis with seven degrees of initiation. Dozy has given the following description of this amazing project:

To link together into one body the vanquished and the conquerors; to unite in the form of a vast secret society with many degrees of initiation free-thinkers—who regarded religion only as a curb for the people—and bigots of all sects; to make tools of believers in order to give power to sceptics; to induce conquerors to overturn the empires they had founded; to build up a party, numerous, compact, and disciplined, which in due time would give the throne, if not to himself, at least to his descendants, such was Abdullah ibn Maymūn's general aim—an extraordinary conception which he worked out with marvellous tact, incomparable skill, and a profound knowledge of the human heart. The means which he adopted were devised with diabolical cunning....

It was ... not among the Shi-ites that he sought his true supporters, but among the Ghebers, the Manicheans, the pagans of Harran, and the students of Greek

philosophy; on the last alone could he rely, to them alone could he gradually unfold the final mystery, and reveal that Imams, religions, and morality were nothing but an imposture and an absurdity. The rest of mankind—the "asses," as Abdullah called them—were incapable of understanding such doctrines. But to gain his end he by no means disdained their aid; on the contrary, he solicited it, but he took care to initiate devout and lowly souls only in the first grades of the sect. His missionaries, who were inculcated with the idea that their first duty was to conceal their true sentiments and adapt themselves to the views of their auditors, appeared in many guises, and spoke, as it were, in a different language to each class. They won over the ignorant vulgar by feats of legerdemain which passed for miracles, or excited their curiosity by enigmatical discourse. In the presence of the devout they assumed the mask of virtue and piety. With mystics they were mystical, and unfolded the inner meanings of phenomena, or explained allegories and the figurative sense of the allegories themselves....

By means such as these the extraordinary result was brought about that a multitude of men of diverse beliefs were all working together for an object known only to a few of them....¹²⁸

I quote this passage at length because it is of immense importance in throwing a light on the organization of modern secret societies. It does not matter what the end may be, whether political, social, or religious, the system remains the same—the setting in motion of a vast number of people and making them work in a cause unknown to them. That this was the method adopted by Weishaupt in organizing the Illuminati and that it came to him from the East will be shown later on. We shall now see how the system of the philosopher Abdullah paved the way for bloodshed by the most terrible sect the world had ever seen.

THE KARMATHITES

The first open acts of violence resulting from the doctrines of Abdullah were carried out by the Karmathites, a new development of the Ismailis. Amongst the many Dais sent out by the leader—which included his son Ahmed and Ahmed's son—was the Dai Hosein Ahwazi, Abdullah's envoy to Irak in Persia, who initiated a certain Hamdan surnamed Karmath into the secrets of the sect. Karmath, who was a born intriguer and believed in nothing, became the leader of the Karmathites in Arabia, where a number of Arabs were soon enlisted in the society. With extraordinary skill he succeeded in persuading these dupes to make over all their money to him, first by means of small contributions, later by larger sums, until at last he convinced them of the advantages of abolishing all private property and establishing the system of the community of goods and wives. This principle was enforced by the passage of the Koran: "Remember the grace of God in that whilst you were enemies, He has united your hearts, so that by His grace you have

become brothers...." De Sacy thus transcribes the methods employed as given by the historian Nowairi:

When Karmath had succeeded in establishing all this, and everyone had agreed to conform to it, he ordered the Dais to assemble all the women on a certain night so that they should mingle promiscuously with all the men. This, he said, was perfection and the last degree of friendship and fraternal union. Often a husband led his wife and presented her himself to one of his brothers when that gave him pleasure. When he (Karmath) saw that he had become absolute master of their minds, had assured himself of their obedience, and found out the degree of their intelligence and discernment, he began to lead them quite astray. He put before them arguments borrowed from the doctrines of the Dualists. They fell in easily with all that he proposed, and then he took away from them all religion and released them from all those duties of piety, devotion, and the fear of God that he prescribed for them in the beginning. He permitted them pillage, and every sort of immoral licence, and taught them to throw off the yoke of prayer, fasting, and other precepts. He taught them that they were held by no obligations, and that they could pillage the goods and shed the blood of their adversaries with impunity, that the knowledge of the master of truth to whom he had called them took the place of everything else, and that with this knowledge they need no longer fear sin or punishment.

As the result of these teachings the Karmathites rapidly became a band of brigands, pillaging and massacring all those who opposed them and spreading terror throughout all the surrounding districts.

Peaceful fraternity was thus turned into a wild lust for conquest; the Karmathites succeeded in dominating a great part of Arabia and the mouth of the Euphrates, and in A.D. 920 extended their ravages westwards. They took possession of the holy city of Mecca, in the defence of which 30,000 Moslems fell. "For a whole century," says von Hammer, "the pernicious doctrines of Karmath raged with fire and sword in the very bosom of Islamism, until the widespread conflagration was extinguished in blood."

But in proclaiming themselves revolutionaries the Karmathites had departed from the plan laid down by the originator of their creed, Abdullah ibn Maymūn, which had consisted not in acts of open violence but in a secret doctrine which should lead to the gradual undermining of all religious faith and a condition of mental anarchy rather than of material chaos. For violence, as always, had produced counter-violence, and it was thus that while the Karmathites were rushing to their own destruction through a series of bloody conflicts, another branch of the Ismailis were quietly reorganizing their forces more in conformity with the original method of their founder. These were the Fatimites, so-called from their professed belief

that the doctrine of the Prophet had descended from Ali, husband of Fatima, Mohammed's daughter. Whilst less extreme than the Karmathites, or than their predecessor Abdullah ibn Maymūn, the Fatimites, according to the historian Makrizi, adopted the method of instilling doubts into the minds of believers and aimed at the substitution of a natural for a revealed religion. Indeed, after the establishment of their power in Egypt, it is difficult to distinguish any appreciable degree of difference in the character of their teaching from the anarchic code of Abdullah and his more violent exponent Karmath.

THE FATIMITES

The founder of the Fatimite dynasty of the Khalifas was one Ubeidallah, known as the Mahdi, accused of Jewish ancestry by his adversaries the Abbasides, who declared—apparently without truth—that he was the son or grandson of Ahmed, son of Adbullah ibn Maymūn, by a Jewess. Under the fourth Fatimite Khalifa Egypt fell into the power of the dynasty, and, before long, bi-weekly assemblages of both men and women known as "societies of wisdom" were instituted in Cairo. In 1004 these acquired a greater importance by the establishment of the Dar ul Hikmat, or the House of Knowledge, by the sixth Khalifa Hakim, who was raised to a deity after his death and is worshipped to this day by the Druses. Under the direction of the Dar ul Hikmat or Grand Lodge of Cairo, the Fatimites continued the plan of Abdullah ibn Maymūn's secret society with the addition of two more degrees, making nine in all. Their method of enlisting proselytes and system of initiation—which, as Claudio Jannet points out, "are absolutely those which Weishaupt, the founder of the *Illuminati*, prescribed to the 'Insinuating Brothers'"¹²⁹—were transcribed by the fourteenth-century historian Nowairi in a description that may be briefly summarized thus¹³⁰:

The proselytes were broadly divided into two classes, the learned and the ignorant. The Dai was to agree with the former, applauding his wisdom, and to impress the latter with his own knowledge by asking him perplexing questions on the Koran. Thus in initiating him into the first degree the Dai assumed an air of profundity and explained that religious doctrines were too abstruse for the ordinary mind, but must be interpreted by men who, like the Dais, had a special knowledge of this science. The initiate was bound to absolute secrecy concerning the truths to be revealed to him and obliged to pay in advance for these revelations. In order to pique his curiosity, the Dai would suddenly stop short in the middle of a discourse, and should the novice finally decline to pay the required sum, he was left in a state of bewilderment which inspired him with the desire to know more.

In the second degree the initiate was persuaded that all his former teachers were wrong and that he must place his confidence solely in those Imams endowed with authority from God; in the third he learnt that these Imams were those of the

Ismailis, seven in number ending with Mohammed, son of Ismail, in contradistinction to the twelve Imams of the Imamias who supported the claims of Ismail's brother Musa; in the fourth he was told that the prophets preceding the Imams descending from Ali were also seven in number—namely Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, the first Mohammed, and finally Mohammed son of Ismail.

So far, then, nothing was said to the initiate in contradiction to the broad tenets of orthodox Islamism. But with the fifth degree the process of undermining his religion began, he was now told to reject tradition and to disregard the precepts of Mohammed; in the sixth he was taught that all religious observances—prayer, fasting, etc.—were only emblematic, that in fact all these things were devices to keep the common herd of men in subordination; in the seventh the doctrines of Dualism, of a greater and a lesser deity, were introduced and the unity of God—fundamental doctrine of Islamism—was destroyed; in the eighth a great vagueness was expressed on the attributes of the first and greatest of these deities, and it was pointed out that real prophets were those who concerned themselves with practical matters—political institutions and good forms of government; finally, in the ninth, the adept was shown that all religious teaching was allegorical and that religious precepts need only be observed in so far as it is necessary to maintain order, but the man who understands the truth may disregard all such doctrines. Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the other prophets were therefore only teachers who had profited by the lessons of philosophy. All belief in revealed religion was thus destroyed. It will be seen then that in the last degrees the whole teaching of the first five was reversed and therefore shown to be a fraud. Fraud in fact constituted the system of the society; in the instructions to the Dais every artifice is described for enlisting proselytes by misrepresentation: Jews were to be won by speaking ill of Christians, Christians by speaking ill of Jews and Moslems alike, Sunnis by referring with respect to the orthodox Khalifas Abu Bakr and Omar and criticizing Ali and his descendants. Above all, care was to be taken not to put before proselytes doctrines that might revolt them, but to make them advance step by step. By these means they would be ready to obey any commands. As the instructions express it:

If you were to give the order to whoever it might be to take from him all that he holds most precious, above all his money, he would oppose none of your orders, and if death surprised him he would leave you all that he possesses in his will and make you his heir. He will think that in the whole world he cannot find a man more worthy than you.

Such was the great secret society which was to form the model for the Illuminati of the eighteenth century, to whom the summary of von Hammer might with equal

truth apply:

To believe nothing and to dare all was, in two words, the sum of this system, which annihilated every principle of religion and morality, and had no other object than to execute ambitious designs with suitable ministers, who, daring all and knowing nothing, since they consider everything a cheat and nothing forbidden, are the best tools of an infernal policy. A system which, with no other aim than the gratification of an insatiable lust for domination, instead of seeking the highest of human objects, precipitates itself into the abyss, and mangling itself, is buried amidst the ruins of thrones and altars, the wreck of national happiness, and the universal execration of mankind.¹³¹

THE DRUSES

The terrible Grand Lodge of Cairo before long became the centre of a new and extraordinary cult. Hakim sixth Fatimite Khalifa and founder of the Dar ul Hikmat—a monster of tyranny and crime whose reign can only be compared to that of Caligula or Nero—was now raised to the place of a divinity by one Ismail Darazi, a Turk who in 1016 announced in a mosque in Cairo that the Khalifa should be made an object of worship. Hakim, who "believed that divine reason was incarnate in him," four years later proclaimed himself a deity, and the cult was finally established by one of his viziers, the Persian mystic Hamza ibn Ali. Hakim's cruelties, however, had so outraged the people of Egypt that a year later he was murdered by a band of malcontents, led, it is said, by his sister, who afterwards concealed his body—a circumstance which gave his followers the opportunity to declare that the divinity had merely vanished in order to test the faith of believers, but would reappear in time and punish apostates. This belief became the doctrine of the Druses of Lebanon, whom Darazi had won over to the worship of Hakim.

It is unnecessary to enter into the details of this strange religion, which still persists to-day in the range of Lebanon; suffice it to say that, although the outcome of the Ismailis, the Druses do not appear to have embraced the materialism of Abdullah ibn Maymūn, but to have grafted on a primitive form of Nature-worship and of Sabeism the avowed belief of the Ismailis in the dynasty of Ali and his successors, and beyond this an abstruse, esoteric creed concerning the nature of the Supreme Deity. God they declare to be "Universal Reason," who manifests Himself by a series of "avatars." Hakim was the last of the divine embodiments, and "when evil and misery have increased to the predestined height he will again appear, to conquer the world and to make his religion supreme."

It is, however, as a secret society that the Druses enter into the scope of this book, for their organization presents several analogies with that which we now know as "masonic." Instead of the nine degrees instituted by the Lodge of Cairo, the Druses

are divided into only three—Profanes, Aspirants, and Wise—to whom their doctrines are gradually unfolded under seal of the strictest secrecy, to ensure which signs and passwords are employed after the manner of Freemasonry. A certain degree of duplicity appears to enter into their scheme, much resembling that enjoined to the Ismaili Dais when enlisting proselytes belonging to other religions: thus in talking to Mohammedans, the Druses profess to be followers of the Prophet; with Christians, they pretend to hold the doctrines of Christianity, an attitude they defend on the score that it is unlawful to reveal the secret dogmas of their creed to a "Black," or unbeliever.

The Druses are in the habit of holding meetings where, as in the Dar ul Hikmat, both men and women assemble and religious and political questions are discussed; the uninitiated, however, are allowed to exercise no influence on decisions, which are reached by the inner circle, to which only the "Wise" are admitted. The resemblance between this organization and that of Grand Orient Freemasonry is clearly apparent. The Druses also have modes of recognition which are common to Freemasonry, and M. Achille Laurent has observed: "The formula or catechism of the Druses resembles that of the Freemasons; one can learn it only from the *Akals* (or *Akels* = Intelligent, a small group of higher initiates), who only reveal its mysteries after having subjected one to tests and made one take terrible oaths."

I shall refer again later in this book to the affinity between the Druses and Freemasons of the Grand Orient.

THE ASSASSINS

It will be seen that the Druses, distinguishing themselves from other Ismaili sects by their worship of Hakim, yet retaining genuine religious beliefs, had not carried on the atheistical tradition of Abdullah ibn Maymūn and of the Grand Lodge of Cairo. But this tradition was to find in 1090 an exponent in the Persian Hasan Saba, a native of Khorasan, the son of Ali, a strict Shiah, who, finding himself suspected of heretical ideas, ended by declaring himself a Sunni. Hasan, brought up in this atmosphere of duplicity, was therefore well fitted to play the Machiavellian rôle of an Ismaili Dai.

Von Hammer regards Hasan as a mighty genius, one of a splendid triad, of which the two others were his schoolfellows the poet Omar Khayyām and Nizam ul Mulk, Grand Vizier under the Seljuk Sultan, Malik Shah. Hasan, having through the protection of Nizam ul Mulk secured titles and revenues and finally risen to office at the Court of the Sultan, attempted to supplant his benefactor and eventually retired in disgrace, vowing vengeance against the Sultan and vizier. At this juncture he encountered several Ismailis, one of whom, a Dai named Mumin, finally converted him to the principles of his sect, and Hasan, declaring himself

now to be a convinced adherent of the Fatimite Khalifas, journeyed to Cairo, where he was received with honour by the Dar ul Hikmat and also by the Khalifa Mustansir, to whom he became counsellor. But his intrigues once more involving him in disgrace, he fled to Aleppo and laid the foundations of his new sect. After enlisting proselytes in Bagdad, Ispahan, Khusistan, and Damaghan, he succeeded in obtaining by strategy the fortress of Alamut in Persia on the Caspian Sea, where he completed the plans for his great secret society which was to become for ever infamous under the name of the Hashishiyān, or *Assassins*.

Under the pretence of belief in the doctrines of Islam and also of adherence to the Ismaili line of succession from the Prophet, Hasan Saba now set out to pave his way to power, and in order to achieve this end adopted the same method as Abdullah ibn Maymūn. But the terrible efficiency of Hasan's society consisted in the fact that a system of physical force was now organized in a manner undreamt of by his predecessor. As von Hammer has observed in an admirable passage:

Opinions are powerless, so long as they only confuse the brain, without arming the hand. Scepticism and free-thinking, as long as they occupied only the minds of the indolent and philosophical, have caused the ruin of no throne, for which purpose religious and political fanaticism are the strongest levers in the hands of nations. It is nothing to the ambitious man what people believe, but it is everything to know how he may turn them for the execution of his projects.¹³²

Thus, as in the case of the French Revolution, "whose first movers," von Hammer also observes, "were the tools or leaders of secret societies," it was not mere theory but the method of enlisting numerous dupes and placing weapons in their hands that brought about the "Terror" of the Assassins six centuries before that of their spiritual descendants, the Jacobins of 1793.

Taking as his groundwork the organization of the Grand Lodge of Cairo, Hasan reduced the nine degrees to their original number of seven, but these now received a definite nomenclature, and included not only real initiates but active agents.

Descending downwards, the degrees of the Assassins were thus as follows: first, the Grand Master, known as the Shaikh-al-Jabal or "Old Man of the Mountain"—owing to the fact that the Order always possessed itself of castles in mountainous regions; second, the Dail Kebir or Grand Priors; third, the fully initiated Dais, religious nuncios and political emissaries; fourth, the Rafiqs or associates, in training for the higher degrees; fifth, the Fadais or "devoted," who undertook to deliver the secret blow on which their superiors had decided; sixth, the Lasiqus, or law brothers; and lastly the "common people," who were to be simply blind instruments. If the equivalents to the words "Dai," "Rafiqs," and "Fadais" given by von Hammer and Dr. Bussell as "Master Masons," "Fellow Crafts," and "Entered

Apprentices" are accepted, an interesting analogy with the degrees of Freemasonry is provided.

Designs against religion were, of course, not admitted by the Order; "strict uniformity to Islam was demanded from all the lower rank of uninitiated, but the *adept* was taught to see through the deception of 'faith and works.' He believed in nothing and recognized that all acts or means were indifferent and the (secular) end alone to be considered."¹³³

Thus the final object was domination by a few men consumed with the lust of power "under the cloak of religion and piety," and the method by which this was to be established was the wholesale assassination of those who opposed them.

In order to stimulate the energy of the Fadais, who were required to carry out these crimes, the superiors of the Order had recourse to an ingenious system of delusion. Throughout the territory occupied by the Assassins were exquisite gardens with fruit trees, bowers of roses, and sparkling streams. Here were arranged luxurious resting-places with Persian carpets and soft divans, around which hovered black-eyed "houris" bearing wine in gold and silver drinking-vessels, whilst soft music mingled with the murmuring water and the song of birds. The young man whom the Assassins desired to train for a career of crime was introduced to the Grand Master of the Order and intoxicated with haschisch—hence the name "Hashishiyān" applied to the sect, from which the word assassin is derived. Under the brief spell of unconsciousness induced by this seductive drug the prospective Fadai was then carried into the garden, where on awaking he believed himself to be in Paradise. After enjoying all its delights he was given a fresh dose of the opiate, and, once more unconscious, was transported back to the presence of the Grand Master, who assured him that he had never left his side but had merely experienced a foretaste of the Paradise that awaited him if he obeyed the orders of his chiefs. The neophyte, thus spurred on by the belief that he was carrying out the commands of the Prophet, who would reward him with eternal bliss, eagerly entered into the schemes laid down for him and devoted his life to murder. Thus by the lure of Paradise the Assassins enlisted instruments for their criminal work and established a system of organized murder on a basis of religious fervour. "Nothing is true and all is allowed" was the ground of their secret doctrine, which, however, being imparted but to few and concealed under the veil of the most austere religionism and piety, restrained the mind under the yoke of blind obedience."¹³⁴ To the outside world all this remained a profound mystery; fidelity to Islam was proclaimed as the fundamental doctrine of the sect, and when the envoy of Sultan Sajar was sent to collect information on the religious beliefs of the Order he was met with the assurance: "We believe in the unity of God, and consider that only as true wisdom which accords with His word and the commands

of the prophet."

Von Hammer, answering the possible contention that, as in the case of the Templars and the Bavarian Illuminati, these methods of deception might be declared a calumny on the Order, points out that in the case of the Assassins no possible doubt existed, for their secret doctrines were eventually revealed by the leaders themselves, first by Hasan II, the third successor of Hasan Saba, and later by Jalal-ud-din Hasan, who publicly anathematized the founders of the sect and ordered the burning of the books that contained their designs against religion—a proceeding which, however, appears to have been a strategical manoeuvre for restoring confidence in the Order and enabling him to continue the work of subversion and crime. A veritable Reign of Terror was thus established throughout the East; the Rafiqs and Fadais "spread themselves in troops over the whole of Asia and darkened the face of the earth"; and "in the annals of the Assassins is found the chronological enumeration of celebrated men of all nations who have fallen the victims of the Ismailis, to the joy of their murderers and the sorrow of the world."¹³⁵

Inevitably this long and systematic indulgence in blood-lust recoiled on the heads of the leaders, and the Assassins, like the Terrorists of France, ended by turning on each other. The Old Man of the Mountain himself was murdered by his brother-in-law and his son Mohammed; Mohammed, in his turn, whilst "aiming at the life of his son Jalal-ud-din, was anticipated by him with poison, which murder was again avenged by poison," so that from "Hasan the Illuminator" down to the last of his line the Grand Masters fell by the hands of their next-of-kin, and "poison and the dagger prepared the grave which the Order had opened for so many."¹³⁶ Finally in 1250 the conquering hordes of the Mongol Mangu Khan swept away the dynasty of the Assassins.

But, although as reigning powers the Assassins and Fatimites ceased to exist, the sects from which they derived have continued up to the present day; still every year at the celebration of the Moharram the Shiahhs beat their breasts and besprinkle themselves with blood, calling aloud on the martyred heroes Hasan and Husain; the Druses of the Lebanon still await the return of Hakim, and in that inscrutable East, the cradle of all the mysteries, the profoundest European adept of secret society intrigue may find himself outdistanced by pastmasters in the art in which he believed himself proficient.

The sect of Hasan Saba was the supreme model on which all systems of organized murder working through fanaticism, such as the Carbonari and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, were based, and the signs, the symbols, the initiations, of the Grand Lodge of Cairo formed the groundwork for the great secret societies of

Europe.

How came this system to be transported to the West? By what channel did the ideas of these succeeding Eastern sects penetrate to the Christian world? In order to answer this question we must turn to the history of the Crusades.

3. THE TEMPLERS

In the year 1118—nineteen years after the first crusade had ended with the defeat of the Moslems, the capture of Antioch and Jerusalem, and the instalment of Godefroi de Bouillon as king of the latter city—a band of nine French *gentilshommes*, led by Hugues de Payens and Godefroi de Saint-Omer, formed themselves into an Order for the protection of pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre. Baldwin II, who at this moment succeeded to the throne of Jerusalem, presented them with a house near the site of the Temple of Solomon—hence the name of Knights Templar under which they were to become famous. In 1128 the Order was sanctioned by the Council of Troyes and by the Pope, and a rule was drawn up by St. Bernard under which the Knights Templar were bound by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

But although the Templars distinguished themselves by many deeds of valour, the regulation that they were to live solely on alms led to donations so enormous that, abandoning their vow of poverty, they spread themselves over Europe, and by the end of the twelfth century had become a rich and powerful body. The motto that the Order had inscribed upon its banner, "*Non nobis, Domine, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*," was likewise forgotten, for, their faith waxing cold, they gave themselves up to pride and ostentation. Thus, as an eighteenth-century masonic writer has expressed it:

The war, which for the greater number of warriors of good faith proved the source of weariness, of losses and misfortunes, became for them (the Templars) only the opportunity for booty and aggrandizement, and if they distinguished themselves by a few brilliant actions, their motive soon ceased to be a matter of doubt when they were seen to enrich themselves even with the spoils of the confederates, to increase their credit by the extent of the new possessions they had acquired, to carry arrogance to the point of rivalling crowned princes in pomp and grandeur, to refuse their aid against the enemies of the faith, as the history of Saladin testifies, and finally to ally themselves with that horrible and sanguinary prince named the

Old Man of the Mountain, Prince of the Assassins.¹³⁷

The truth of the last accusation is, however, open to question. For a time, at any rate, the Templars had been at war with the Assassins. When in 1152 the Assassins murdered Raymond, Comte de Tripoli, the Templars entered their territory and forced them to sign a treaty by which they were to pay a yearly tribute of 12,000 gold pieces in expiation of the crime. Some years later the Old Man of the Mountain sent an ambassador to Amaury, King of Jerusalem, to tell him privately that if the Templars would forgo the payment of this tribute he and his followers would embrace the Christian faith. Amaury accepted, offering at the same time to compensate the Templars, but some of the Knights assassinated the ambassador before he could return to his master. When asked for reparations the Grand Master threw the blame on an evil one-eyed Knight named Gautier de Maisnil.¹³⁸

It is evident, therefore, that the relations between the Templars and the Assassins were at first far from amicable; nevertheless, it appears probable that later on an understanding was brought about between them. Both on this charge and on that of treachery towards the Christian armies, Dr. Bussell's impartial view of the question may be quoted:

When in 1149 the Emperor Conrad III failed before Damascus, the Templars were believed to have a secret understanding with the garrison of that city; ... in 1154 they were said to have sold, for 60,000 gold pieces, a prince of Egypt who had wished to become a Christian; he was taken home to suffer certain death at the hands of his fanatical family. In 1166 Amaury, King of Jerusalem, hanged twelve members of the Order for betraying a fortress to Nureddin.

And Dr. Bussell goes on to say that it cannot be disputed that they had "long and important dealings" with the Assassins "and were therefore suspected (not unfairly) of imbibing their precepts and following their principles."¹³⁹

By the end of the thirteenth century the Templars had become suspect, not only in the eyes of the clergy, but of the general public. "Amongst the common people," one of their latest apologists admits, "vague rumours circulated. They talked of the covetousness and want of scruple of the Knights, of their passion for aggrandizement and their rapacity. Their haughty insolence was proverbial. Drinking habits were attributed to them; the saying was already in use 'to drink like a Templar.' The old German word *Tempelhaus* indicated a house of ill-fame."¹⁴⁰

The same rumours had reached Clement V even before his accession to the papal throne in 1305,¹⁴¹ and in this same year he summoned the Grand Master of the Order, Jacques du Molay, to return to France from the island of Cyprus, where he

was assembling fresh forces to avenge the recent reverses of the Christian armies.

Du Molay arrived in France with sixty other Knights Templar and 150,000 gold florins, as well as a large quantity of silver that the Order had amassed in the East.¹⁴²

The Pope now set himself to make enquiries concerning the charges of "unspeakable apostasy against God, detestable idolatry, execrable vice, and many heresies" that had been "secretly intimated" to him. But, to quote his own words:

Because it did not seem likely nor credible that men of such religion who were believed often to shed their blood and frequently expose their persons to the peril of death for Christ's name, and who showed such great and many signs of devotion both in divine offices as well as in fasts, as in other devotional observances, should be so forgetful of their salvation as to do these things, we were unwilling ... to give ear to this kind of insinuation ... (*hujusmodi insinuacioni ac delacioni ipsorum ... aurem noluimus inclinare*).¹⁴³

The King of France, Philippe le Bel, who had hitherto been the friend of the Templars, now became alarmed and urged the Pope to take action against them; but before the Pope was able to find out more about the matter, the King took the law into his own hands and had all the Templars in France arrested on October 13, 1307. The following charges were then brought against them by the Inquisitor for France before whom they were examined:

1. The ceremony of initiation into their Order was accompanied by insults to the Cross, the denial of Christ, and gross obscenities.
2. The adoration of an idol which was said to be the image of the true God.
3. The omission of the words of consecration at Mass.
4. The right that the lay chiefs arrogated to themselves of giving absolution.
5. The authorization of unnatural vice.

To all these infamies a great number of the Knights, including Jacques du Molay, confessed in almost precisely the same terms; at their admission into the Order, they said, they had been shown the cross on which was the figure of Christ, and had been asked whether they believed in Him; when they answered yes, they were told in some cases that this was wrong (*dixit sibi quod male credebat*),¹⁴⁴ because He was not God, He was a false prophet (*quia falsus propheta erat, nec erat Deus*).¹⁴⁵ Some added that they were then shown an idol or a bearded head which they were told to worship¹⁴⁶; one added that this was of such "a terrible aspect that it seemed to him to be the face of some devil, called in French *un maufé*, and that whenever he saw it he was so overcome with fear that he could hardly look at it without fear and trembling."¹⁴⁷ All who confessed declared that they had been

ordered to spit on the crucifix, and very many that they had received the injunction to commit obscenities and to practise unnatural vice. Some said that on their refusal to carry out these orders they had been threatened with imprisonment, even perpetual imprisonment; a few said they had actually been incarcerated¹⁴⁸; one declared that he had been terrorized, seized by the throat, and threatened with death.¹⁴⁹

Since, however, a number of these confessions were made under torture, it is more important to consider the evidence provided by the trial of the Knights at the hands of the Pope, where this method was not employed.

Now, at the time the Templars were arrested, Clement V., deeply resenting the King's interference with an Order which existed entirely under papal jurisdiction, wrote in the strongest terms of remonstrance to Philippe le Bel urging their release, and even after their trial, neither the confessions of the Knights nor the angry expostulations of the King could persuade him to believe in their guilt.¹⁵⁰ But as the scandal concerning the Templars was increasing, he consented to receive in private audience "a certain Knight of the Order, of great nobility and held by the said Order in no slight esteem," who testified to the abominations that took place on the reception of the Brethren, the spitting on the cross, and other things which were not lawful nor, humanly speaking, decent.¹⁵¹

The Pope then decided to hold an examination of seventy-two French Knights at Poitiers in order to discover whether the confessions made by them before the Inquisitor at Paris could be substantiated, and at this examination, conducted without torture or pressure of any kind in the presence of the Pope himself, the witnesses declared on oath that they would tell "the full and pure truth." They then made confessions which were committed to writing in their presence, and these being afterwards read aloud to them, they expressly and willingly approved them (*perseverantes in illis eas expresse et sponte, prout recitate fuerunt approbarunt*).¹⁵²

Besides this, an examination of the Grand Master, Jacques du Molay, and the Preceptors of the Order was held in the presence of "three Cardinals and four public notaries and many other good men." These witnesses, says the official report, "having sworn with their hands on the Gospel of God" (*ad sancta dei evangelia ab iis corporaliter tacta*) that—

they would on all the aforesaid things speak the pure and full truth, they, separately, freely, and spontaneously, without any coercion and fear, deposed and confessed among other things, the denial of Christ and spitting upon the cross when they were received into the Order of the Temple. And some of them (deposed and confessed) that under the same form, namely, with denial of Christ and

spitting on the cross, they had received many Brothers into the Order. Some of them too confessed certain other horrible and disgusting things on which we are silent.... Besides this, they said and confessed that those things which are contained in the confessions and depositions of heretical depravity which they made lately before the Inquisitor (of Paris) were true.

Their confessions, being again committed to writing, were approved by the witnesses, who then with bended knees and many tears asked for and obtained absolution.¹⁵³

The Pope, however, still refused to take action against the whole Order merely because the Master and Brethren around him had "gravely sinned," and it was decided to hold a papal commission in Paris. The first sitting took place in November 1309, when the Grand Master and 231 Knights were summoned before the pontifical commissioners. "This enquiry," says Michelet, "was conducted slowly, with much consideration and gentleness (*avec beaucoup de ménagement et de douceur*) by high ecclesiastical dignitaries, an archbishop, several bishops, etc."¹⁵⁴ But although a number of the Knights, including the Grand Master, now retracted their admissions, some damning confessions were again forthcoming.

It is impossible within the scope of this book to follow the many trials of the Templars that took place in different countries—in Italy, at Ravenna, Pisa, Bologna, and Florence, where torture was not employed and blasphemies were admitted,¹⁵⁵ or in Germany, where torture was employed but no confessions were made and a verdict was given in favour of the Order. A few details concerning the trial in England may, however, be of interest.

It has generally been held that torture was not applied in England owing to the humanity of Edward II, who at first absolutely refused to listen to any accusations against the Order.¹⁵⁶ On December 10, 1307, he had written to the Pope in these terms:

And because the said Master or Brethren constant in the purity of the Catholic faith have been frequently commended by us, and by all our kingdom, both in their life and morals, we are unable to believe in suspicious stories of this kind until we know with greater certainty about these things.

We, therefore, pity from our souls the suffering and losses of the Sd. Master and brethren, which they suffer in consequence of such infamy, and we supplicate most affectionately your Sanctity if it please you, that considering with favour suited to the good character of the Master and brethren, you may deem fit to meet with more indulgence the detractions, calumnies and charges by certain envious and evil disposed persons, who endeavour to turn their good deeds into works of

perverseness opposed to divine teaching; until the said charges attributed to them shall have been brought legally before you or your representatives here and more fully proved.¹⁵⁷

Edward II also wrote in the same terms to the Kings of Portugal, Castile, Aragon, and Sicily. But two years later, after Clement V had himself heard the confessions of the Order, and a Papal Bull had been issued declaring that "the unspeakable wickednesses and abominable crimes of notorious heresy" had now "come to the knowledge of almost everyone," Edward II was persuaded to arrest the Templars and order their examination. According to Mr. Castle, whose interesting treatise we quote here, the King would not allow torture to be employed, with the result that the Knights denied all charges; but later, it is said, he allowed himself to be overpersuaded, and "torture appears to have been applied on one or two occasions,"¹⁵⁸ with the result that three Knights confessed to all and were given absolution.¹⁵⁹ At Southwark, however, "a considerable number of brethren" admitted that "they had been strongly accused of the crimes of negation and spitting, they did not say they were guilty but that they could not purge themselves ... and therefore they abjured these and all other heresies."¹⁶⁰ Evidence was also given against the Order by outside witnesses, and the same stories of intimidation at the ceremony of reception were told.¹⁶¹ At any rate, the result of the investigation was not altogether satisfactory, and the Templars were finally suppressed in England as elsewhere by the Council of Vienne in 1312.

In France more rigorous measures were adopted and fifty-four Knights who had retracted their confessions were burnt at the stake as "relapsed heretics" on May 12, 1310. Four years later, on March 14, 1314, the Grand Master, Jacques du Molay, suffered the same fate.

Now, however much we must execrate the barbarity of this sentence—as also the cruelties that had preceded it—this is no reason why we should admit the claim of the Order to noble martyrdom put forward by the historians who have espoused their cause. The character of the Templars is not rehabilitated by condemning the conduct of the King and Pope. Yet this is the line of argument usually adopted by the defenders of the Order. Thus the two main contentions on which they base their defence are, firstly, that the confessions of the Knights were made under torture, therefore they must be regarded as null and void; and, secondly, that the whole affair was a plot concerted between the King and Pope in order to obtain possession of the Templars' riches. Let us examine these contentions in turn.

In the first place, as we have seen, all confessions were not made under torture. No one, as far as I am aware, disputes Michelet's assertion that the enquiry before the Papal Commission in Paris, at which a number of Knights adhered to the statements they had made to the Pope, was conducted without pressure of any

kind. But further, the fact that confessions are made under torture does not necessarily invalidate them as evidence. Guy Fawkes also confessed under torture, yet it is never suggested that the whole story of the Gunpowder Plot was a myth. Torture, however much we may condemn it, has frequently proved the only method for overcoming the intimidation exercised over the mind of a conspirator; a man bound by the terrible obligations of a confederacy and fearing the vengeance of his fellow-conspirators will not readily yield to persuasion, but only to force. If, then, some of the Templars were terrorized by torture, or even by the fear of torture, it must not be forgotten that terrorism was exercised by both sides. Few will deny that the Knights were bound by oaths of secrecy, so that on one hand they were threatened with the vengeance of the Order if they betrayed its secrets, and on the other faced with torture if they refused to confess. Thus they found themselves between the devil and the deep sea. It was therefore not a case of a mild and unoffending Order meeting with brutal treatment at the hands of authority, but of the victims of a terrible autocracy being delivered into the hands of another autocracy.

Moreover, do the confessions of the Knights appear to be the outcome of pure imagination such as men under the influence of torture might devise? It is certainly difficult to believe that the accounts of the ceremony of initiation given in detail by men in different countries, all closely resembling each other, yet related in different phraseology, could be pure inventions. Had the victims been driven to invent they would surely have contradicted each other, have cried out in their agony that all kinds of wild and fantastic rites had taken place in order to satisfy the demands of their interlocutors. But no, each appears to be describing the same ceremony more or less completely, with characteristic touches that indicate the personality of the speaker, and in the main all the stories tally.

The further contention that the case against the Templars was manufactured by the King and Pope with a view to obtaining their wealth is entirely disproved by facts. The latest French historian of mediæval France, whilst expressing disbelief in the guilt of the Templars, characterizes this counter-accusation as "puerile." "Philippe le Bel," writes M. Funck-Brentano, "has never been understood; from the beginning people have not been just to him. This young prince was one of the greatest kings and the noblest characters that have appeared in history."¹⁶²

Without carrying appreciation so far, one must nevertheless accord to M. Funck-Brentano's statement of facts the attention it merits. Philippe has been blamed for debasing the coin of the realm; in reality he merely ordered it to be mixed with alloy as a necessary measure after the war with England,¹⁶³ precisely as own coinage was debased in consequence of the recent war. This was done quite openly and the coinage was restored at the earliest opportunity. Intensely national, his policy of attacking the Lombards, exiling the Jews, and suppressing the Templars,

however regrettable the methods by which it was carried out, resulted in immense benefits to France; M. Funck-Brentano has graphically described the prosperity of the whole country during the early fourteenth century—the increase of population, flourishing agriculture and industry. "In Provence and Languedoc one meets swineherds who have vineyards; simple cowherds who have town houses."¹⁶⁴

The attitude of Philippe le Bel towards the Templars must be viewed in this light—ruthless suppression of any body of people who interfered with the prosperity of France. His action was not that of arbitrary authority; he "proceeded," says M. Funck-Brentano, "by means of an appeal to the people. In his name Nogaret (the Chancellor) spoke to the Parisians in the garden of the Palace (October 13, 1307). Popular assemblies were convoked all over France";¹⁶⁵ "the Parliament of Tours, with hardly a dissentient vote, declared the Templars worthy of death. The University of Paris gave the weight of their judgement as to the fullness and authenticity of the confessions."¹⁶⁶ Even assuming that these bodies were actuated by the same servility as that which has been attributed to the Pope, how are we to explain the fact that the trial of the Order aroused no opposition among the far from docile people of Paris? If the Templars had indeed, as they professed, been leading noble and upright lives, devoting themselves to the care of the poor, one might surely expect their arrest to be followed by popular risings. But there appears to have been no sign of this.

As to the Pope, we have already seen that from the outset he had shown himself extremely reluctant to condemn the Order, and no satisfactory explanation is given of his change of attitude except that he wished to please the King. As far as his own interests were concerned, it is obvious that he could have nothing to gain by publishing to the world a scandal that must inevitably bring opprobrium on the Church. His lamentations to this effect in the famous Bull¹⁶⁷ clearly show that he recognized this danger and therefore desired at all costs to clear the accused Knights, if evidence could be obtained in their favour. It was only when the Templars made damning admissions in his presence that he was obliged to abandon their defence.¹⁶⁸ Yet we are told that he did this out of base compliance with the wishes of Philippe le Bel.

Philippe le Bell is thus represented as the arch-villain of the whole piece, through seven long years hounding down a blameless Order—from whom up to the very moment of their arrest he had repeatedly received loans of money—solely with the object of appropriating their wealth. Yet after all we find that the property of the Templars was not appropriated by the King, but was given by him to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem!

What was the fate of the Templars' goods? Philippe le Bel decided that they should be handed over to the Hospitallers. Clement V states that the Orders given by the

King on this subject were executed. Even the domain of the Temple in Paris ... up to the eve of the Revolution was the property of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The royal treasury kept for itself certain sums for the costs of the trial. These had been immense.¹⁶⁹

These facts in no way daunt the antagonists of Philippe, who we are now assured—again without any proof whatever—was overruled by the Pope in this matter. But setting all morality aside, as a mere question of policy, is it likely that the King would have deprived himself of his most valuable financial supporters and gone to the immense trouble of bringing them to trial without first assuring himself that he would benefit by the affair? Would he, in other words, have killed the goose that laid the golden eggs without any guarantee that the body of the goose would remain in his possession? Again, if, as we are told, the Pope suppressed the Order so as to please the King, why should he have thwarted him over the whole purpose the King had in view? Might we not expect indignant remonstrances from Philippe at thus being baulked of the booty he had toiled so long to gain? But, on the contrary, we find him completely in agreement with the Pope on this subject. In November 1309 Clement V distinctly stated that "Philippe the Illustrious, King of France," to whom the facts concerning the Templars had been told, was "not prompted by avarice since he desired to keep or appropriate for himself no part of the property of the Templars, but liberally and devotedly left them to us and the Church to be administered," etc.¹⁷⁰

Thus the whole theory concerning the object for which the Templars were suppressed falls to the ground—a theory which on examination is seen to be built up entirely on the plan of imputing motives without any justification in facts. The King acted from cupidity, the Pope from servility, and the Templars confessed from fear of torture—on these pure hypotheses defenders of the Order base their arguments.

The truth is, far more probably, that if the King had any additional reason for suppressing the Templars it was not envy of their wealth but fear of the immense power their wealth conferred; the Order dared even to defy the King and to refuse to pay taxes. The Temple in fact constituted an *imperium in imperio* that threatened not only the royal authority but the whole social system.¹⁷¹ An important light is thrown on the situation by M. Funck-Brentano in this passage:

As the Templars had houses in all countries, they practised the financial operations of the international banks of our times; they were acquainted with letters of change, orders payable at sight, they instituted dividends and annuities on deposited capital, advanced funds, lent on credit, controlled private accounts, undertook to raise taxes for the lay and ecclesiastical seigneurs.¹⁷²

Through their proficiency in these matters—acquired very possibly from the Jews of Alexandria whom they must have met in the East—the Templars had become the "international financiers" and "international capitalists" of their day; had they not been suppressed, all the evils now denounced by Socialists as peculiar to the system they describe as "Capitalism"—trusts, monopolies, and "corners"—would in all probability have been inaugurated during the course of the fourteenth century in a far worse form than at the present day, since no legislation existed to protect the community at large. The feudal system, as Marx and Engels perceived, was the principal obstacle to exploitation by a financial autocracy.¹⁷³

Moreover, it is by no means improbable that this order of things would have been brought about by the violent overthrow of the French monarchy—indeed, of all monarchies; the Templars, "those terrible conspirators," says Eliphaz Lévi, "threatened the whole world with an immense revolution."¹⁷⁴

Here perhaps we may find the reason why this band of dissolute and rapacious nobles has enlisted the passionate sympathy of democratic writers. For it will be noticed that these same writers who attribute the King's condemnation of the Order to envy of their wealth never apply this argument to the demagogues of the eighteenth century and suggest that their accusations against the nobles of France were inspired by cupidity, nor would they ever admit that any such motive may enter into the diatribes against private owners of wealth to-day. The Templars thus remain the only body of capitalists, with the exception of the Jews, to be not only pardoned for their riches but exalted as noble victims of prejudice and envy. Is it merely because the Templars were the enemies of monarchy? Or is it that the world revolution, whilst attacking private owners of property, has never been opposed to International Finance, particularly when combined with anti-Christian tendencies?

It is the continued defence of the Templars which, to the present writer, appears the most convincing evidence against them. For even if one believes them innocent of the crimes laid to their charge, how is it possible to admire them in their later stages? The fact that cannot be denied is that they were false to their obligations; that they took the vow of poverty and then grew not only rich but arrogant; that they took the vow of chastity and became notoriously immoral.¹⁷⁵ Are all these things then condoned because the Templars formed a link in the chain of world revolution?

At this distance of time the guilt or innocence of the Templars will probably never be conclusively established either way; on the mass of conflicting evidence bequeathed to us by history no one can pronounce a final judgement.

Without attempting to digmatize on the question, I would suggest that the real

truth may be that the Knights were both innocent and guilty, that is to say, that a certain number were initiated into the secret doctrine of the Order whilst the majority remained throughout in ignorance. Thus according to the evidence of Stephen de Stapelbrugge, an English Knight, "there were two modes of reception, one lawful and good and the other contrary to the Faith."¹⁷⁶ This would account for the fact that some of the accused declined to confess even under the greatest pressure. These may really have known nothing of the real doctrines of the Order, which were confided orally only to those whom the superiors regarded as unlikely to be revolted by them. Such have always been the methods of secret societies, from the Ismailis onward.

This theory of a double doctrine is put forward by Loiseleur, who observes:

If we consult the statutes of the Order of the Temple as they have come down to us, we shall certainly discover there is nothing that justifies the strange and abominable practices revealed at the Inquiry. But ... besides the public rule, had not the Order another one, whether traditional or written, authorizing or even prescribing these practices—a secret rule, revealed only to the initiates?¹⁷⁷

Eliphas Lévi also exonerates the majority of the Templars from complicity in either anti-monarchical or anti-religious designs:

These tendencies were enveloped in profound mystery and the Order made an outward profession of the most perfect orthodoxy. The Chiefs alone knew whither they were going; the rest followed unsuspectingly.¹⁷⁸

What, then, was the Templar heresy? On this point we find a variety of opinions. According to Wilcke, Ranke, and Weber it was "the unitarian deism of Islam"¹⁷⁹; Lecouteulx de Canteleu thinks, however, it was derived from heretical Islamic sources, and relates that whilst in Palestine, one of the Knights, Guillaume de Montbard, was initiated by the Old Man of the Mountain in a cave of Mount Lebanon.¹⁸⁰ That a certain resemblance existed between the Templars and the Assassins has been indicated by von Hammer,¹⁸¹ and further emphasized by the Freemason Clavel:

Oriental historians show us, at different periods, the Order of the Templars maintaining intimate relations with that of the Assassins, and they insist on the affinity that existed between the two associations. They remark that they had adopted the same colours, white and red; that they had the same organization, the same hierarchy of degrees, those of fedavi, refik, and dai in one corresponding to those of novice, professed, and knight in the other; that both conspired for the ruin of the religions they professed in public, and that finally both possessed numerous

castles, the former in Asia, the latter in Europe.¹⁸²

But in spite of these outward resemblances it does not appear from the confessions of the Knights that the secret doctrine of the Templars was that of the Assassins or of any Ismaili sect by which, in accordance with orthodox Islamism, Jesus was openly held up as a prophet, although, secretly, indifference to all religion was inculcated. The Templars, as far as can be discovered, were anti-Christian deists; Loiseleur considers that their ideas were derived from Gnostic or Manichean dualists—Cathari, Paulicians, or more particularly Bogomils, of which a brief account must be given here.

The *Paulicians*, who flourished about the seventh century A.D., bore a resemblance to the Cainites and Ophites in their detestation of the Demiurgus and in the corruption of their morals. Later, in the ninth century, the *Bogomils*, whose name signifies in Slavonic "friends of God" and who had migrated from Northern Syria and Mesopotamia to the Balkan Peninsula, particularly Thrace, appeared as a further development of Manichean dualism. Their doctrine may be summarized thus:

God, the Supreme Father, has two sons, the elder Satanael, the younger Jesus. To Satanael, who sat on the right hand of God, belonged the right of governing the celestial world, but, filled with pride, he rebelled against his Father and fell from Heaven. Then, aided by the companions of his fall, he created the visible world, image of the celestial, having like the other its sun, moon, and stars, and last he created man and the serpent which became his minister. Later Christ came to earth in order to show men the way to Heaven, but His death was ineffectual, for even by descending into Hell He could not wrest the power from Satanael, i.e. Satan.

This belief in the impotence of Christ and the necessity therefore for placating Satan, not only "the Prince of this world," but its creator, led to the further doctrine that Satan, being all-powerful, should be adored. Nicetas Choniates, a Byzantine historian of the twelfth century, described the followers of this cult as "Satanists," because "considering Satan powerful they worshipped him lest he might do them harm"; subsequently they were known as Luciferians, their doctrine (as stated by Neuss and Vitoduranus) being that Lucifer was unjustly driven out of Heaven, that one day he will ascend there again and be restored to his former glory and power in the celestial world.

The Bogomils and Luciferians were thus closely akin, but whilst the former divided their worship between God and His two sons, the latter worshipped Lucifer only, regarding the material world as his work and holding that by indulging the flesh they were propitiating their Demon-Creator. It was said that a black cat, the

symbol of Satan, figured in their ceremonies as an object of worship, also that at their horrible nocturnal orgies sacrifices of children were made and their blood used for making the Eucharistic bread of the sect.¹⁸³

Thus the Templars recognize at the same time a good god, incommunicable to man and consequently without symbolic representation, and a bad god, to whom they give the features of an idol of fearful aspect.¹⁸⁴

Their most fervent worship was addressed to this god of evil, who alone could enrich them. "They said with the Luciferians: 'The elder son of God, Satanael or Lucifer alone has a right to the homage of mortals; Jesus his younger brother does not deserve this honour.'"¹⁸⁵

Although we shall not find these ideas so clearly defined in the confessions of the Knights, some colour is lent to this theory by those who related that the reason given to them for not believing in Christ was "that He was nothing, He was a false prophet and of no value, and that they should believe in the Higher God of Heaven who could save them."¹⁸⁶ According to Loiseleur, the idol they were taught to worship, the bearded head known to history as Baphomet, represented "the inferior god, organizer and dominator of the material world, author of good and evil here below, him by whom evil was introduced into creation."¹⁸⁷

The etymology of the word Baphomet is difficult to discover; Raynouard says it originated with two witnesses heard at Carcassonne who spoke of "Figura Baflometi," and suggests that it was a corruption of "Mohammed," whom the Inquisitors wished to make the Knights confess they were taught to adore.¹⁸⁸ But this surmise with regard to the intentions of the Inquisitors seems highly improbable, since they must have been well aware that, as Wilcke points out, the Moslems forbid all idols.¹⁸⁹ For this reason Wilcke concludes that the Mohammedanism of the Templars was combined with Cabalism and that their idol was in reality the *macroprosopos*, or head of the Ancient of Ancients, represented as an old man with a long beard, or sometimes as three heads in one, which has already been referred to under the name of the Long Face in the first chapter of this book—a theory which would agree with Eliphas Lévi's assertion that the Templars were "initiated into the mysterious doctrines of the Cabala."¹⁹⁰ But Lévi goes on to define this teaching under the name of Johannism. It is here that we reach a further theory with regard to the secret doctrine of the Templars—the most important of all, since it emanates from masonic and neo-Templar sources thus effectually disposing of the contention that the charge brought against the Order of apostasy from the Catholic faith is solely the invention of Catholic writers.

In 1842 the Freemason Ragon related that the Templars learnt from the "initiates of the East" a certain Judaic doctrine which was attributed to St. John the Apostle;

therefore "they renounced the religion of St. Peter" and became Johannites.¹⁹¹ Eliphas Lévi expresses the same opinion.

Now, these statements are apparently founded on a legend which was first published early in the nineteenth century, when an association calling itself the *Ordre du Temple* and claiming direct descent from the original Templar Order published two works, the *Manuel des Chevaliers de l'Ordre du Temple* in 1811, and the *Lévitikon* in 1831, together with a version of the Gospel of St. John differing from the Vulgate. These books, which appear to have been printed only for private circulation amongst the members and are now extremely rare, relate that the Order of the Temple had never ceased to exist since the days of Jacques du Molay, who appointed Jacques de Larménie his successor in office, and from that time onwards a line of Grand Masters had succeeded each other without a break up to the end of the eighteenth century, when it ceased for a brief period but was reinstituted under a new Grand Master, Fabré Palaprat, in 1804. Besides publishing the list of all Grand Masters, known as the "Charter of Larmenius," said to have been preserved in the secret archives of the Temple, these works also reproduce another document drawn from the same repository describing the origins of the Order. This manuscript, written in Greek on parchment, dated 1154, purports to be partly taken from a fifth-century MS. and relates that Hugues de Payens, first Grand Master of the Templars, was initiated in 1118—that is to say, in the year the Order was founded—into the religious doctrine of "the Primitive Christian Church" by its Sovereign Pontiff and Patriarch, Theoclet, sixtieth in direct succession from St. John the Apostle. The history of the Primitive Church is then given as follows:

Moses was initiated in Egypt. Profoundly versed in the physical, theological, and metaphysical mysteries of the priests, he knew how to profit by these so as to surmount the power of the Mages and deliver his companions. Aaron, his brother, and the chiefs of the Hebrews became the depositaries of his doctrine....

The Son of God afterwards appeared on the scene of the world.... He was brought up at the school of Alexandria.... Imbued with a spirit wholly divine, endowed with the most astounding qualities (*dispositions*), he was able to reach all the degrees of Egyptian initiation. On his return to Jerusalem, he presented himself before the chiefs of the Synagogue.... Jesus Christ, directing the fruit of his lofty meditations towards universal civilization and the happiness of the world, rent the veil which concealed the truth from the peoples. He preached the love of God, the love of one's neighbour, and equality before the common Father of all men....

Jesus conferred evangelical initiation on his apostles and disciples. He transmitted his spirit to them, divided them into several orders after the practice of John, the beloved disciple, the apostle of fraternal love, whom he had instituted Sovereign

Pontiff and Patriarch....

Here we have the whole Cabalistic legend of a secret doctrine descending from Moses, of Christ as an Egyptian initiate and founder of a secret order—a theory, of course, absolutely destructive of belief in His divinity. The legend of the *Ordre du Temple* goes on to say:

Up to about the year 1118 (i.e. the year the Order of the Temple was founded) the mysteries and the hierarchic Order of the initiation of Egypt, transmitted to the Jews by Moses, then to the Christians by J.C., were religiously preserved by the successors of St. John the Apostle. These mysteries and initiations, regenerated by the evangelical initiation (or baptism), were a sacred trust which the simplicity of the primitive and unchanging morality of the *Brothers of the East* had preserved from all adulteration....

The Christians, persecuted by the infidels, appreciating the courage and piety of these brave crusaders, who, with the sword in one hand and the cross in the other, flew to the defence of the holy places, and, above all, doing striking justice to the virtues and the ardent charity of Hugues de Payens, held it their duty to confide to hands so pure the treasures of knowledge acquired throughout so many centuries, sanctified by the cross, the dogma and the morality of the Man-God. Hugues was invested with the Apostolic Patriarchal power and placed in the legitimate order of the successors of St. John the apostle or the evangelist.

Such is the origin of the foundation of the Order of the Temple and of the fusion in this Order of the different kinds of initiation of the Christians of the East designated under the title of Primitive Christians or Johannites.

It will be seen at once that all this story is subtly subversive of true Christianity, and that the appellation of Christians applied to the Johannites is an imposture. Indeed Fabré Palaprat, Grand Master of the *Ordre du Temple* in 1804, who in his book on the Templars repeats the story contained in the *Lévitikon and the Manuel des Chevaliers du Temple*, whilst making the same profession of "primitive Christian" doctrines descending from St. John through Theoclet and Hugues de Payens to the Order over which he presides, goes on to say that the secret doctrine of the Templars "was essentially contrary to the canons of the Church of Rome and that it is principally to this fact that one must attribute the persecution of which history has preserved the memory."¹⁹² The belief of the Primitive Christians, and consequently that the Templars, with regard to the miracles of Christ is that He "did or may have done extraordinary or miraculous things," and that since "God can do things incomprehensible to human intelligence," the Primitive Church venerates "all the acts of Christ as they are described in the Gospel, whether it considers them as acts of human science or whether as acts of divine power."¹⁹³

Belief in the divinity of Christ is thus left an open question, and the same attitude is maintained towards the Resurrection, of which the story is omitted in the Gospel of St. John possessed by the Order. Fabré Palaprat further admits that the gravest accusations brought against the Templars were founded on facts which he attempts to explain away in the following manner:

The Templars having in 1307 carefully abstracted all the manuscripts composing the secret archives of the Order from the search made by authority, and these authentic manuscripts having been preciously preserved since that period, we have to-day the certainty that the Knights endured a great number of religious and moral trials before reaching the different degrees of initiation: thus, for example, the recipient might receive the injunction under pain of death to trample on the crucifix or to worship an idol, but if he yielded to the terror which they sought to inspire in him he was declared unworthy of being admitted to the higher grades of the Order. One can imagine in this way how beings, too feeble or too immoral to endure the trials of initiation, may have accused the Templars of giving themselves up to infamous practices and of having superstitious beliefs.

It is certainly not surprising that an Order which gave such injunctions as these, for whatever purpose, should have become the object of suspicion.

Eliphas Lévi, who, like Ragon, accepts the statements of the *Ordre du Temple* concerning the "Johannite" origin of the Templars' secret doctrine, is, however, not deceived by these professions of Christianity, and boldly asserts that the Sovereign Pontiff Theoclet initiated Hugues de Payens "into the mysteries and hopes of his pretended Church, he lured him by the ideas of sacerdotal sovereignty and supreme royalty, he indicated him finally as his successor. So the Order of the Knights of the Temple was stained from its origin with schism and conspiracy against Kings."¹⁹⁴ Further, Lévi relates that the real story told to initiates concerning Christ was no other than the infamous *Toledot Yeshu* described in the first chapter of this book, and which the Johannites dared to attribute to St. John.¹⁹⁵ This would accord with the confession of the Catalonian Knight Templar, Galcerandus de Teus, who stated that the form of absolution in the Order was: "I pray God that He may pardon your sins as He pardoned St. Mary Magdalene and the thief on the cross"; but the witness went on to explain:

By the thief of which the head of the Chapter speaks, is meant, according to our statutes, that Jesus or Christ who was crucified by the Jews because he was not God, and yet he said he was God and the King of the Jews, which was an outrage to the true God who is in Heaven. When Jesus, a few moments before his death, had his side pierced by the lance of Longinus, he repented of having called himself God and King of the Jews and he asked pardon of the true God; then the true God pardoned him. It is thus that we apply to the crucified Christ these words: "as God

pardoned the thief on the cross."¹⁹⁶

Raynouard, who quotes this deposition, stigmatizes it as "singular and extravagant"; M. Matter agrees that it is doubtless extravagant, but that "it merits attention. There was a whole system there, which was not the invention of Galcerant."¹⁹⁷ Eliphas Lévi provides the clue to that system and to the reason why Christ was described as a thief, by indicating the Cabalistic legend wherein He was described as having *stolen* the sacred Name from the Holy of Holies. Elsewhere he explains that the Johannites "made themselves out to be the only people initiated into the true mysteries of the religion of the Saviour. They professed to know the real history of Jesus Christ, and by adopting part of Jewish traditions and the stories of the Talmud, they made out that the facts related in the Gospels"—that is to say, the Gospels accepted by the orthodox Church—"were only allegories of which St. John gives the key."¹⁹⁸

But it is time to pass from legend to facts. For the whole story of the initiation of the Templars by the "Johannites" rests principally on the documents produced by the Ordre du Temple in 1811. According to the Abbés Grégoire and Münter the authenticity and antiquity of these documents are beyond dispute. Grégoire, referring to the parchment manuscript of the *Lévitikon* and Gospel of St. John, says that "Hellenists versed in paleography believe this manuscript to be of the thirteenth century, others declare it to be earlier and to go back to the eleventh century."¹⁹⁹ Matter, on the other hand, quoting Münter's opinion that the manuscripts in the archives of the modern Templars date from the thirteenth century, observes that this is all a tissue of errors and that the critics, including the learned Professor Thilo of Halle, have recognized that the manuscript in question, far from belonging to the thirteenth century, dates from the beginning of the eighteenth. From the arrangement of the chapters of the Gospel, M. Matter arrives at the conclusion that it was intended to accompany the ceremonies of some masonic or secret society.²⁰⁰ We shall return to this possibility in a later chapter.

The antiquity of the manuscript containing the history of the Templars thus remains an open question on which no one can pronounce an opinion without having seen the original. In order, then, to judge of the probability of the story that this manuscript contained it is necessary to consult the facts of history and to discover what proof can be found that any such sect as the Johannites existed at the time of the Crusades or earlier. Certainly none is known to have been called by this name or by one resembling it before 1622, when some Portuguese monks reported the existence of a sect whom they described as "Christians of St. John" inhabiting the banks of the Euphrates. The appellation appears, however, to have been wrongly applied by the monks, for the sectarians in question, variously known as the Mandæans, Mandaites, Sabians, Nazoreans, etc., called themselves Mandaï Iyahi, that is to say, the disciples, or rather the wise men, of John, the

word *mandai* being derived from the Chaldean word *manda*, corresponding to the Greek word γνῶσις or wisdom.²⁰¹ The multiplicity of names given to the Mandæans arises apparently from the fact that in their dealings with other communities they took the name of Sabians, whilst they called the wise and learned amongst themselves Nazoreans.²⁰² The sect formerly inhabited the banks of the Jordan, but was driven out by the Moslems, who forced them to retire to Mesopotamia and Babylonia, where they particularly affected the neighbourhood of rivers in order to be able to carry out their peculiar baptismal rites.²⁰³

There can be no doubt that the doctrines of the Mandæans do resemble the description of the Johannite heresy as given by Eliphas Lévi, though not by the *Ordre du Temple*, in that the Mandæans professed to be the disciples of St. John—the Baptist, however, not the Apostle—but were at the same time the enemies of Jesus Christ. According to the Mandæans' *Book of John* (Sidra d'Yahya), Yahya, that is to say, St. John, baptized myriads of men during forty years in the Jordan. By a mistake—or in response to a written mandate from heaven saying, "Yahya, baptize the liar in the Jordan"—he baptized the false prophet Yishu Meshiha (the Messiah Jesus), son of the devil Ruha Kadishta.²⁰⁴ The same idea is found in another book of the sect, called the "Book of Adam," which represents Jesus as the perverter of St. John's doctrine and the disseminator of iniquity and perfidy throughout the world.²⁰⁵ The resemblance between all this and the legends of the Talmud, the Cabala, and the Toledot Yeshu is at once apparent; moreover, the Mandæans claim for the "Book of Adam" the same origin as the Jews claimed for the Cabala, namely, that it was delivered to Adam by God through the hands of the angel Razael.²⁰⁶ This book, known to scholars as the *Codex Nasaræus*, is described by Münter as "a sort of mosaic without order, without method, where one finds mentioned Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, the Temple of Jerusalem, St. John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the Christians, and Mohammed." M. Matter, whilst denying any proof of the Templar succession from the Mandæans, nevertheless gives good reason for believing that the sect itself existed from the first centuries of the Christian era and that its books dated from the eighth century²⁰⁷; further that these Mandæans or Nazoreans—not to be confounded with the pre-Christian Nazarites or Christian Nazarenes—were Jews who revered St. John the Baptist as the prophet of ancient Mosaism, but regarded Jesus Christ as a false Messiah sent by the powers of darkness.²⁰⁸ Modern Jewish opinion confirms this affirmation of Judaic inspiration and agrees with Matter in describing the Mandæans as Gnostics: "Their sacred books are in an Aramaic dialect, which has close affinities with that of the Talmud of Babylon." The Jewish influence is distinctly visible in the Mandæan religion. "It is essentially of the type of ancient Gnosticism, traces of which are found in the Talmud, the Midrash, and in a modified form the later Cabala."²⁰⁹

It may then be regarded as certain that a sect existed long before the time of the

Crusades corresponding to the description of the Johannites given by Eliphas Lévi in that it was Cabalistic, anti-Christian, yet professedly founded on the doctrines of one of the St. Johns. Whether it was by this sect that the Templars were indoctrinated must remain an open question. M. Matter objects that the evidence lacking to such a conclusion lies in the fact that the Templars expressed no particular reverence for St. John; but Loiseleur asserts that the Templars did prefer the Gospel of St. John to that of the other evangelists, and that modern masonic lodges claiming descent from the Templars possess a special version of this Gospel said to have been copied from the original on Mount Athos.²¹⁰ It is also said that "Baphomets" were preserved in the masonic lodges of Hungary, where a debased form of Masonry, known as Johannite Masonry, survives to this day. If the Templar heresy was that of the Johannites, the head in question might possibly represent that of John the Baptist, which would accord with the theory that the word Baphomet was derived from Greek words signifying baptism of wisdom. This would, moreover, not be incompatible with Loiseleur's theory of an affinity between the Templars and the Bogomils, for the Bogomils also possessed their own version of the Gospel of St. John, which they placed on the heads of their neophytes during the ceremony of initiation,²¹¹ giving as the reason for the 'I peculiar veneration they professed for its author that they regarded St. John as the servant of the Jewish God Satanael.²¹² Eliphas Lévi even goes so far as to accuse the Templars of following the occult practices of the Luciferians, who carried the doctrines of the Bogomils to the point of paying homage to the powers of darkness:

Let us declare for the edification of the vulgar ... and for the greater glory of the Church which has persecuted the Templars, burned the magicians and excommunicated the Free-Masons, etc., let us say boldly and loudly, that all the initiates of the occult sciences ... have adored, do and will always adore that which is signified by this frightful symbol [the Sabbatic goat].²¹³ Yes, in our profound conviction, the Grand Masters of the Order of the Templars adored Baphomet and caused him to be adored by their initiates.²¹⁴

It will be seen, then, that the accusation of heresy brought against the Templars does not emanate solely from the Catholic Church, but also from the secret societies. Even our Freemasons, who, for reasons I shall show later, have generally defended the Order, are now willing to admit that there was a very real case against them. Thus Dr. Ranking, who has devoted many years of study to the question, has arrived at the conclusion that Johannism is the real clue to the Templar heresy. In a very interesting paper published in the masonic journal *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, he observes that "the record of the Templars in Palestine is one long tale of intrigue and treachery on the part of the Order," and finally:

That from the very commencement of Christianity there has been transmitted through the centuries a body of doctrine incompatible with Christianity in the

various official Churches....

That the bodies teaching these doctrines professed to do so on the authority of St. John, to whom, as they claimed, the true secrets had been committed by the Founder of Christianity.

That during the Middle Ages the main support of the Gnostic bodies and the main repository of this knowledge was the Society of the Templars.²¹⁵

What is the explanation of this choice of St. John for the propagation of anti-Christian doctrines which we shall find continuing up to the present day? What else than the method of perversion which in its extreme form becomes Satanism, and consists in always selecting the most sacred things for the purpose of desecration? Precisely then because the Gospel of St. John is the one of all the four which most insists on the divinity of Christ, the occult anti-Christian sects have habitually made it the basis of their rites.

4. THREE CENTURIES OF OCCULTISM

It has been shown in the foregoing chapters that from very early times occult sects had existed for two purposes—esoteric and political. Whilst the Manicheans, the early Ismailis, the Bogomils, and the Luciferians had concerned themselves mainly with religious or esoteric doctrines, the later Ismailis, the Fatimites, the Karmathites, and Templars had combined secrecy and occult rites with the political aim of domination. We shall find this double tradition running through all the secret society movement up to the present day.

The Dualist doctrines attributed to the Templars were not, however, confined to this Order in Europe, but had been, as we have seen, those professed by the Bogomils and also by the Cathari, who spread westwards from Bulgaria and Bosnia to France. It was owing to their sojourn in Bulgaria that the Cathari gained the popular nickname of "Bulgars" or "Bourgres," signifying those addicted to unnatural vice. One section of the Cathari in the South of France became known after 1180 as the Albigenses, thus called from the town of Albi, although their headquarters were really in Toulouse. Christians only in name, they adhered in secret to the Gnostic and Manichean doctrines of the earlier Cathari, which they would appear to have combined with Johannism, since, like this Eastern sect, they claimed to possess their own Gospel of St. John.²¹⁶

Although not strictly a secret society, the Albigenses were divided after the secret society system into initiates and semi-initiates. The former, few in number, known as the *Perfecti*, led in appearance an austere life, refraining from meat and professing abhorrence of oaths or of lying. The mystery in which they enveloped themselves won for them the adoring reverence of the *Credentes*, who formed the great majority of the sect and gave themselves up to every vice, to usury, brigandage, and perjury, and whilst describing marriage as prostitution, condoning incest and all forms of licence.²¹⁷ The *Credentes*, who were probably not fully initiated into the Dualist doctrines of their superiors, looked to them for salvation through the laying-on of hands according to the system of the Manicheans.

It was amongst the nobles of Languedoc that the Albigenses found their principal support. This "Judæa of France," as it has been called, was peopled by a medley of mixed races, Iberian, Gallic, Roman, and Semitic.²¹⁸ The nobles, very different from the "ignorant and pious chivalry of the North," had lost all respect for their traditions. "There were few who in going back did not encounter some Saracen or Jewish grandmother in their genealogy."²¹⁹ Moreover, many had brought back to Europe the laxity of morals they had contracted during the Crusades. The Comte de Comminges practised polygamy, and, according to ecclesiastical chronicles, Raymond VI, Comte de Toulouse, one of the most ardent of the Albigense *Credentes*, had his harem.²²⁰ The Albigensian movement has been falsely represented as a protest merely against the tyranny of the Church of Rome; in reality it was a rising against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity—more than this, against all principles of religion and morality. For whilst some of the sect openly declared that the Jewish law was preferable to that of the Christians,²²¹ to others the God of the Old Testament was as abhorrent as the "false Christ" who suffered at Golgotha; the old hatred of the Gnostics and Manicheans for the demiurgus lived again in these rebels against the social order. Forerunners of the seventeenth-century Libertines and eighteenth-century Illuminati, the Albigense nobles, under the pretext of fighting the priesthood, strove to throw off all the restraints the Church imposed.

Inevitably the disorders that took place throughout the South of France led to reprisals, and the Albigenses were suppressed with all the cruelty of the age—a fact which has afforded historians the opportunity to exalt them as noble martyrs, victims of ecclesiastical despotism. But again, as in the case of the Templars, the fact that they were persecuted does not prove them innocent of the crimes laid to their charge.

SATANISM

At the beginning of the fourteenth century another development of Dualism, far

more horrible than the Manichean heresy of the Albigenses, began to make itself felt. This was the cult of Satanism, or black magic. The subject is one that must be approached with extreme caution, owing to the fact that on one hand much that has been written about it is the result of mediæval superstition, which sees in every departure from the Roman Catholic Faith the direct intervention of the Evil One, whilst on the other hand the conspiracy of history, which denies *in toto* the existence of the Occult Power, discredits all revelations on this question, from whatever source they emanate, as the outcome of hysterical imagination.²²² This is rendered all the easier since the subject by its amazing extravagance lends itself to ridicule.

It is, however, idle to deny that the cult of evil has always existed; the invocation of the powers of darkness was practised in the earliest days of the human race and, after the Christian era, found its expression, as we have seen, in the Cainites, the Euchites, and the Luciferians. These are not surmises, but actual facts of history. Towards the end of the twelfth century Luciferianism spread eastwards through Styria, the Tyrol, and Bohemia, even as far as Brandenburg; by the beginning of the thirteenth century it had invaded western Germany, and in the fourteenth century reached its zenith in that country, as also in Italy and France. The cult had now reached a further stage in its development, and it was not the mere propitiation of Satanael as the prince of this world practised by the Luciferians, but actual Satanism—the love of evil for the sake of evil—which formed the doctrine of the sect known in Italy as *la vecchia religione* or the "old religion." Sorcery was adopted as a profession, and witches, not, as is popularly supposed, sporadic growths, were trained in schools of magic to practise their art. These facts should be remembered when the Church is blamed for the violence it displayed against witchcraft—it was not individuals, but a system which it set out to destroy.

The essence of Satanism is desecration. In the ceremonies for infernal evocation described by Eliphas Lévi we read: "It is requisite to profane the ceremonies of the religion one belongs to and to trample its holiest symbols under foot."²²³ This practice found a climax in desecrating the Holy Sacrament. The consecrated wafer was given as food to mice, toads, and pigs, or denied in unspeakable ways. A revolting description of the Black Mass may be found in Huysmans's book *Là-bas*. It is unnecessary to transcribe the loathsome details here. Suffice it, then, to show that this cult had a very real existence, and if any further doubt remains on the matter, the life of Gilles de Rais supplies documentary evidence of the visible results of black magic in the Middle Ages.

Gilles de Rais was born at Machecoul in Brittany about the year 1404. The first period of his life was glorious; the companion and guide of Jeanne d'Arc, he became Maréchal of France and distinguished himself by many deeds of valour. But after dissipating his immense fortune, largely on Church ceremonies carried

out with the wildest extravagance, he was led to study alchemy, partly by curiosity and partly as a means for restoring his shattered fortunes. Hearing that Germany and Italy were the countries where alchemy flourished, he enlisted Italians in his service and was gradually drawn into the further region of magic. According to Huysmans, Gilles de Rais had remained until this moment a Christian mystic under the influence of Jeanne d'Arc, but after her death—possibly in despair—he offered himself to the powers of darkness. Evokers of Satan now flocked to him from every side, amongst them Prelati, an Italian, by no means the old and wrinkled sorcerer of tradition, but a young and attractive man of charming manners. For it was from Italy that came the most skilful adepts in the art of alchemy, astrology, magic, and infernal evocation, who spread themselves over Europe, particularly France. Under the influence of these initiators Gilles de Rais signed a letter to the devil in a meadow near Machecoul asking him for "knowledge, power, and riches," and offering in exchange anything that might be asked of him with the exception of his life or his soul. But in spite of this appeal and of a pact signed with the blood of the writer, no Satanic apparitions were forthcoming.

It was then that, becoming still more desperate, Gilles de Rais had recourse to the abominations for which his name has remained infamous—still more frightful invocations, loathsome debaucheries, perverted vice in every form, Sadic cruelties, horrible sacrifices, and, finally, holocausts of little boys and girls collected by his agents in the surrounding country and put to death with the most inhuman tortures. During the years 1432-40 literally hundreds of children disappeared. Many of the names of the unhappy little victims were preserved in the records of the period. Gilles de Rais met with a well-deserved end: in 1440 he was hanged and burnt. So far he does not appear to have found a panegyrist to place him in the ranks of noble martyrs.

It will, of course, be urged that the crimes here described were those of a criminal lunatic and not to be attributed to any occult cause; the answer to this is that Gilles was not an isolated unit, but one of a group of occultists who cannot all have been mad. Moreover, it was only after his invocation of the Evil One that he developed these monstrous proclivities. So also his eighteenth-century replica, the Marquis de Sade, combined with his abominations an impassioned hatred of the Christian religion.

What is the explanation of this craze for magic in Western Europe? Deschamps points to the Cabala, "that science of demoniacal arts, of which the Jews were the initiators," and undoubtedly in any comprehensive review of the question the influence of the Jewish Cabalists cannot be ignored. In Spain, Portugal, Provence, and Italy the Jews by the fifteenth century had become a power; as early as 1450 they had penetrated into the intellectual circles of Florence, and it was also in Italy

that, a century later, the modern Cabalistic school was inaugurated by Isaac Luria (1533-72), whose doctrines were organized into a practical system by the Hasidim of Eastern Europe for the writing of amulets, the conjuration of devils, mystical jugglery with numbers and letters, etc.²²⁴ Italy in the fifteenth century was thus a centre from which Cabalistic influences radiated, and it may be that the Italians who indoctrinated Gilles de Rais had drawn their inspiration from this source. Indeed Eliphaz Lévi, who certainly cannot be accused of "Anti-Semitism," declares that "the Jews, the most faithful trustees of the secret of the Cabala, were almost always the great masters of magic in the Middle Ages,"²²⁵ and suggests that Gilles de Rais took his monstrous recipes for using the blood of murdered children "from some of those old Hebrew *grimoires* (books on magic), which, if they had been known, would have sufficed to hold up the Jews to the execration of the whole earth."²²⁶ Voltaire, in his *Henriade*, likewise attributes the magical blood-rites practised in the sixteenth century to Jewish inspiration:

Dans l'ombre de la nuit, sous une voûte obscure,
Le silence conduit leur assemblée impure.
A la pâle lueur d'un magique flambeau
S'élève un vil autel dressé sur un tombeau.
C'est là que des deux rois on plaça les images,
Objets de leur terreur, objets de leurs outrages.
Leurs sacrilèges mains ont mêlé sur l'autel
A des noms infernaux le nom de l'Éternel.
Sur ces murs ténébreux des lances sont rangées,
Dans des vases de sang leurs pointes sont plongées;
Appareil menaçant de leur mystère affreux.
Le prêtre de ce temple est un de ces Hébreux
Qui, proscrits sur la terre et citoyens du monde,
Portent de mers en mers leur misère profonde,
Et, d'un antique ramas de superstitions,
Ont rempli dès longtemps toutes les nations, etc.

Voltaire adds in a footnote: "It was ordinarily Jews that were made use of for magical operations. This ancient superstition comes from the secrets of the Cabala, of which the Jews called themselves the sole depositaries. Catherine de Medicis, the Maréchal d'Ancre, and many others employed Jews for these spells."

This charge of black magic recurs all through the history of Europe from the earliest times. The Jews are accused of poisoning wells, of practising ritual murder, of using stolen church property for purposes of desecration, etc. No doubt there enters into all this a great amount of exaggeration, inspired by popular prejudice and mediæval superstition. Yet, whilst condemning the persecution to which the Jews were subjected on this account, it must be admitted that they laid themselves

open to suspicion by their real addiction to magical arts. If ignorant superstition is found on the side of the persecutors, still more amazing superstition is found on the side of the persecuted. Demonology in Europe was in fact essentially a Jewish science, for although a belief in evil spirits existed from the earliest times and has always continued to exist amongst primitive races, and also amongst the ignorant classes in civilized countries, it was mainly through the Jews that these dark superstitions were imported to the West, where they persisted not merely amongst the lower strata of the Jewish population, but formed an essential part of Jewish tradition. Thus the Talmud says:

If the eye could perceive the demons that people the universe, existence would be impossible. The demons are more numerous than we are: they surround us on all sides like trenches dug round vineyards. Every one of us has a thousand on his left hand and ten thousand on his right. The discomfort endured by those who attend rabbinical conferences ... comes from the demons mingling with men in these circumstances. Besides, the fatigue one feels in one's knees in walking comes from the demons that one knocks up against at every step. If the clothing of the Rabbis wears out so quickly, it is again because the demons rub up against them. Whoever wants to convince himself of their presence has only to surround his bed with sifted cinders and the next morning he will see the imprints of cocks' feet.²²⁷

The same treatise goes on to give directions for seeing demons by burning portions of a black cat and placing the ashes in one's eye: "then at once one perceives the demons." The Talmud also explains that devils particularly inhabit the waterspouts on houses and are fond of drinking out of water-jugs, therefore it is advisable to pour a little water out of a jug before drinking, so as to get rid of the unclean part.²²⁸

These ideas received a fresh impetus from the publication of the Zohar, which, a Jewish writer tells us, "from the fourteenth century held almost unbroken sway over the minds of the majority of the Jews. In it the Talmudic legends concerning the existence and activity of the *shedhim* (demons) are repeated and amplified, and a hierarchy of demons was established corresponding to the heavenly hierarchy.... Manasseh [ben Israel]'s *Nishmat Hayim* is full of information concerning belief in demons.... Even the scholarly and learned Rabbis of the seventeenth century clung to the belief."²²⁹

Here, then, it is not a case of ignorant peasants evolving fantastic visions from their own scared imaginations, but of the Rabbis, the acknowledged leaders of a race claiming civilized traditions and a high order of intelligence, deliberately inculcating in their disciples the perpetual fear of demoniacal influences. How much of this fear communicated itself to the Gentile population? It is at any rate a curious coincidence to notice the resemblances between so-called popular

superstitions and the writings of the Rabbis. For example, the vile confessions made both by Scotch and French peasant women accused of witchcraft concerning the nocturnal visits paid them by male devils²³⁰ find an exact counterpart in passages of the Cabala, where it is said that "the demons are both male and female, and they also endeavour to consort with human beings—a conception from which arises the belief in *incubi* and *succubæ*."²³¹ Thus, on Jewish authority, we learn the Judaic origin of this strange delusion.

It is clearly to the same source that we may trace the magical formulæ for the healing of diseases current at the same period. From the earliest times the Jews had specialized in medicine, and many royal personages insisted on employing Jewish doctors,²³² some of whom may have acquired medical knowledge of a high order. The Jewish writer Margoliouth dwells on this fact with some complacency, and goes on to contrast the scientific methods of the Hebrew doctors with the quackeries of the monks:

In spite of the reports circulated by the monks, that the Jews were sorcerers (in consequence of their superior medical skill), Christian patients would frequent the houses of the Jewish physicians in preference to the monasteries, where cures were pretended to have been effected by some extraordinary relics, such as the nails of St. Augustine, the extremity of St. Peter's second toe, ... etc. It need hardly be added that the cures effected by the Jewish physicians were more numerous than those by the monkish impostors.²³³

Yet in reality the grotesque remedies which Margoliouth attributes to Christian superstition appear to have been partly derived from Jewish sources. The author of a further article on Magic in Hastings' *Encyclopædia* goes on to say that the magical formulæ handed down in Latin in ancient medical writings and used by the monks were mainly of Eastern origin, derived from Babylonish, Egyptian, and Jewish magic. The monks therefore "played merely an intermediate rôle."²³⁴ Indeed, if we turn to the Talmud we shall find cures recommended no less absurd than those which Margoliouth derides. For example:

The eggs of a grasshopper as a remedy for toothache, the tooth of a fox as a remedy for sleep, viz. the tooth of a live fox to prevent sleep and of a dead one to cause sleep, the nail from the gallows where a man was hanged, as a remedy for swelling.²³⁵

A strongly "pro-Semite" writer quotes a number of Jewish medical writings of the eighteenth century, republished as late as the end of the nineteenth, which show the persistence of these magical formulæ amongst the Jews. Most of these are too loathsome to transcribe; but some of the more innocuous are as follows: "For epilepsy kill a cock and let it putrefy." "In order to protect yourself from all evils,

gird yourself with the rope with which a criminal has been hung." Blood of different kinds also plays an important part: "Fox's blood and wolf's blood are good for stone in the bladder, ram's blood for colic, weasel blood for scrofula," etc.—these to be externally applied.²³⁶

But to return to Satanism. Whoever were the secret inspirers of magical and diabolical practices during the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the evidence of the existence of Satanism during this long period is overwhelming and rests on the actual facts of history. Details quite as extravagant and revolting as those contained in the works of Eliphas Lévi²³⁷ or in Huysmans's *Là-bas* are given in documentary form by Margaret Alice Murray in her singularly passionless work relating principally to the witches of Scotland.²³⁸

The cult of evil is a reality—by whatever means we may seek to explain it. Eliphas Lévi, whilst denying the existence of Satan "as a superior personality and power," admits this fundamental truth: "Evil exists; it is impossible to doubt it. We can do good or evil. There are beings who knowingly and voluntarily do evil."²³⁹ There are also beings who love evil. Lévi has admirably described the spirit that animates such beings in his definition of black magic:

Black magic is really but a combination of sacrileges and murders graduated with a view to the permanent perversion of the human will and the realization in a living man of the monstrous phantom of the fiend. It is, therefore, properly speaking, the religion of the devil, the worship of darkness, the hatred of goodness exaggerated to the point of paroxysm; it is the incarnation of death and the permanent creation of hell.²⁴⁰

The Middle Ages, which depicted the devil fleeing from holy water, were not perhaps quite so benighted as our superior modern culture has led us to suppose. For that "hatred of goodness exaggerated to the point of paroxysm," that impulse to desecrate and defile which forms the basis of black magic and has manifested itself in successive phases of the world-revolution, springs from fear. So by their very hatred the powers of darkness proclaim the existence of the powers of light and their own impotence. In the cry of the demoniac: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God," do we not hear the unwilling tribute of the vanquished to the victor in the mighty conflict between good; and evil?

THE ROSICRUCIANS

In dealing with the question of Magic it is necessary to realize that although to the world in general the word is synonymous with necromancy, it does not bear this significance in the language of occultism, particularly the occultism of the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Magic at this date was a term employed to cover many branches of investigation which Robert Fludd, the English Rosicrucian, classified under various headings, of which the first three are as follows: (1) "*Natural Magic*, ... that most occult and secret department of physics by which the mystical properties of natural substances are extracted"; (2) "*Mathematical Magic*, which enables adepts in the art to "construct marvellous machines by means of their geometrical knowledge "; whilst (3) "*Venefic Magic* "is familiar with potions, philtres, and with various preparations of poisons." ²⁴¹

It is obvious that all these have now passed into the realms of science and are no longer regarded as magical arts; but the further categories enumerated by Fludd and comprised under the general heading of *Necromantic Magic* retain the popular sense of the term. These are described as (i) *Goetic*, which consists in "diabolical commerce with unclean spirits, in rites of criminal curiosity, in illicit songs and invocations, and in the evocation of the souls of the dead"; (2) *Maleficent*, which is the adjuration of the devils by the virtue of Divine Names; and (3) *Theurgic*, purporting "to be governed by good angels and the Divine Will, but its wonders are most frequently performed by evil spirits, who assume the names of God and of the angels." (4) "The last species of magic is the *Thaumaturgic*, begetting illusory phenomena; by this art the Magi produced their phantoms and other marvels." To this list might be added *Celestial Magic*, or knowledge dealing with the influence of the heavenly bodies, on which astrology is based.

The forms of magic dealt with in the preceding part of this chapter belong therefore to the second half of these categories, that is to say, to *Necromantic Magic*. But at the same period another movement was gradually taking shape which concerned itself with the first category enumerated above, that is to say, the secret properties of natural substances.

A man whose methods appear to have approached to the modern conception of scientific research was Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, commonly known as Paracelsus, the son of a German doctor, born about 1493, who during his travels in the East is said to have acquired a knowledge of some secret doctrine which he afterwards elaborated into a system for the healing of diseases. Although his ideas were thus doubtless drawn from some of the same sources as those from which the Jewish Cabala descended, Paracelsus does not appear to have been a Cabalist, but a scientist of no mean order, and, as an isolated thinker, apparently connected with no secret association, does not enter further into the scope of this work.

Paracelsus must therefore not be identified with the school of so-called "Christian Cabalists," who, from Raymond Lulli, the "doctor illuminatus" of the thirteenth century, onward, drew their inspiration from the Cabala of the Jews. This is not to

say that the influence under which they fell was wholly pernicious, for, just as certain Jews appear to have acquired some real medical skill, so also they appear to have possessed some real knowledge of natural science, inherited perhaps from the ancient traditions of the East or derived from the writings of Hippocrates, Galen, and other of the great Greek physicians and as yet unknown to Europe. Thus Eliphas Lévi relates that the Rabbi Jeziel, a Cabalistic Jew protected by St. Louis, possessed the secret of ever-burning lamps,²⁴² claimed later by the Rosicrucians, which suggests the possibility that some kind of luminous gas or electric light may have been known to the Jews. In alchemy they were the acknowledged leaders; the most noted alchemist of the fourteenth century, Nicholas Flamel, discovered the secret of the art from the book of "Abraham the Jew, Prince, Priest, Levite, Astrologer, and Philosopher," and this actual book is said to have passed later into the possession of Cardinal Richelieu.²⁴³

It was likewise from a Florentine Jew, Alemanus or Datylus, that Pico della Mirandola, the fifteenth-century mystic, received instructions in the Cabala²⁴⁴ and imagined that he had discovered in it the doctrines of Christianity. This delighted Pope Sixtus IV, who thereupon ordered Cabalistic writings to be translated into Latin for the use of divinity students. At the same time the Cabala was introduced into Germany by Reuchlin, who had learnt Hebrew from the Rabbi Jacob b. Jeziel Loans, court physician to Frederick III, and in 1494 published a Cabalistic treatise *De Verbo Mirifico*, showing that all wisdom and true philosophy are derived from the Hebrews. Considerable alarm appears, however, to have been created by the spread of Rabbinical literature, and in 1509 a Jew converted to Christianity, named Pfefferkorn, persuaded the Emperor Maximilian I to burn all Jewish books except the Old Testament. Reuchlin, consulted on this matter, advised only the destruction of the Toledot Yeshu and of the Sepher Nizzachon by the Rabbi Lipmann, because these works "were full of blasphemies against Christ and against the Christian religion," but urged the preservation of the rest. In this defence of Jewish literature he was supported by the Duke of Bavaria, who appointed him professor at Ingoldstadt, but was strongly condemned by the Dominicans of Cologne. In reply to their attacks Reuchlin launched his defence *De Arte Cabalistica*, glorifying the Cabala, of which the "central doctrine for him was the Messianology around which all its other doctrines grouped themselves."²⁴⁵ His whole philosophical system, as he himself admitted, was in fact entirely Cabalistic, and his views were shared by his contemporary Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim. As a result of these teachings a craze for Cabalism spread amongst Christian prelates, statesmen, and warriors, and a number of Christian thinkers took up the doctrines of the Cabala and "essayed to work them over in their own way." Athanasius Kircher and Knorr, Baron von Rosenroth, author of the *Kabbala Denudata*, in the course of the seventeenth century "endeavoured to spread the Cabala among the Christians by translating Cabalistic works which they regarded as most ancient wisdom." "Most of them," the *Jewish Encyclopædia* goes on to observe derisively, "held the absurd idea that the Cabala contained proofs of the

truth of Christianity.... Much that appears Christian [in the Cabala] is, in fact, nothing but the logical development of certain ancient esoteric doctrines."²⁴⁶

The Rosicrucians appear to have been the outcome both of this Cabalistic movement and of the teachings of Paracelsus. The earliest intimation of their existence was given in a series of pamphlets which appeared at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The first of these, entitled the *Fama Fraternitatis; or a Discovery of the Fraternity of the most Laudable Order of the Rosy Cross*, was published at Cassel in 1614 and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* early in the following year. These contain what may be described as the "Grand Legend" of Rosicrucianism, which has been repeated with slight variations up to the present day. Briefly, this story is as follows²⁴⁷:

"The most godly and highly-illuminated Father, our brother C.R.," that is to say, Christian Rosenkreutz, "a German, the chief and original of our Fraternity," was born in 1378, and some sixteen years later travelled to the East with a Brother P.A.L., who had determined to go to the Holy Land. On reaching Cyprus, Brother P.A.L. died and "so never came to Jerusalem." Brother C.R., however, having become acquainted with certain Wise Men of "Damasco in Arabia," and beheld what great wonders they wrought, went on alone to Damasco. Here the Wise Men received him, and he then set himself to study Physick and Mathematics and to translate the Book M into Latin. After three years he went to Egypt, whence he journeyed on to Fez, where "he did get acquaintance with those who are called the Elementary inhabitants, who revealed to him many of their secrets.... Of those of Fez he often did confess that their Magic was not altogether pure and also that their Cabala was defiled with their religion, but notwithstanding he knew how to make good use of the same." After two years Brother C.R. departed the city Fez and sailed away with many costly things into Spain, where he conferred with the learned men and being "ready bountifully to impart all his arts and secrets" showed them amongst other things how "there might be a society in Europe which might have gold, silver, and precious stones sufficient for them to bestow on kings for their necessary uses and lawful purposes...."

Christian Rosenkreutz then returned to Germany, where "there is nowadays no want of learned men, Magicians, Cabalists, Physicians, and Philosophers." Here he "builded himself a fitting and neat habitation in which he ruminated his voyage and philosophy and reduced them together in a true memorial." At the end of five years' meditation there "came again into his mind the wished-for Reformation: accordingly he chose some few adjoined with him," the Brethren G.V., I.A., and I.O.—the last of whom "was very expert and well learned in Cabala as his book H witnesseth"—to form a circle of initiates. "After this manner began the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross." Five other Brethren were afterwards added, all Germans except I.A., and these eight constituted his new building called Sancti Spiritus. The

following agreement was then drawn up:

First, that none of them should profess any other thing than to cure the sick, and that gratis.

Second, none of the posterity should be constrained to wear one certain kind of habit, but therein to follow the custom of the country.

Third, that every year, upon the day C., they should meet together at the house Sancti Spiritus, or write the cause of his absence.

Fourth, every Brother should look about for a worthy person who, after his decease, might succeed him.

Fifth, the word C.R. should be their seal, mark, and character.

Sixth, the Fraternity should remain secret one hundred years.

Finally Brother C.R. died, but where and when, or in what country he was buried, remained a secret. The date, however, is generally given as 1484. In 1604 the Brethren who then constituted the inner circle of the Order discovered a door on which was written in large letters

Post 120 Annos Patebo.

On opening the door a vault was disclosed to view, where beneath a brass tablet the body of Christian Rosenkreutz was found, "whole and unconsumed," with all his "ornaments and attires," and holding in his hand the parchment "I" which "next unto the Bible is our greatest treasure," whilst beside him lay a number of books, amongst others the *Vocabulario* of Paracelsus, who, however, the *Fama* observes, earlier "was none of our Fraternity."²⁴⁸

The Brethren now knew that after a time there would be "a general reformation both of divine and human things." While declaring their belief in the Christian faith, the *Fama* goes on to explain that:

Our Philosophy is not a new invention, but as Adam after his fall hath received it and as Moses and Solomon used it, ... wherein Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and others did hit the mark and wherein Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, did excel, but especially wherewith that wonderful Book the Bible agreeth.

It will be seen that, according to this Manifesto, Rosicrucianism was a combination of the ancient secret tradition handed down from the patriarchs through the

philosophers of Greece and of the first Cabala of the Jews.

The "Grand Legend" of Rosicrucianism rests, however, on no historical evidence; there is, in fact, not the least reason to suppose that any such person as Christian Rosenkreutz ever existed. The Illuminatus von Knigge in the eighteenth century asserted that:

It is now recognized amongst enlightened men that no real Rosicrucians have existed, but that the whole of what is contained in the *Fama* and the *Universal Reformation of the World* [another Rosicrucian pamphlet which appeared in the same year] was only a subtle allegory of Valentine Andrea, of which afterwards partly deceivers (such as the Jesuits) and partly visionaries made use in order to realize this dream.²⁴⁹

What, then, was the origin of the name Rose-Cross? According to one Rosicrucian tradition, the word "Rose" does not derive from the flower depicted on the Rosicrucian cross, but from the Latin word *ros*, signifying "dew," which was supposed to be the most powerful solvent of gold, whilst *crux*, the cross, was the chemical hieroglyphic for "light."²⁵⁰ It is said that the Rosicrucians interpreted the initials on the cross INRI by the sentence "Igne Nitrum Roris Invenitur."²⁵¹ Supposing this derivation to be correct, it would be interesting to know whether any connexion could be traced between the first appearance of the word Rosie Cross in the *Fama Fraternitatis* at the date of 1614 and the cabalistic treatise of the celebrated Rabbi of Prague, Shabbethai Sheftel Horowitz, entitled *Shefa Tal*, that is to say, "The Effusion of Dew," which appeared in 1612.²⁵² Although this book has often been reprinted, no copy is to be found in the British Museum, so I am unable to pursue this line of enquiry further. A simpler explanation may be that the Rosy Cross derived from the Red Cross of the Templars. Mirabeau, who as a Freemason and an Illuminatus was in a position to discover many facts about the secret societies of Germany during his stay in the country, definitely asserts that "the Rose Croix Masons of the seventeenth century were only the ancient Order of the Templars secretly perpetuated."²⁵³

Lecouteux de Canteleu is more explicit:

In France the Knights (Templar) who left the Order, henceforth hidden, and so to speak unknown, formed the Order of the Flaming Star and of the Rose-Croix, which in the fifteenth century spread itself in Bohemia and Silesia. Every Grand officer of these Orders had all his life to wear the Red Cross and to repeat every day the prayer of St. Bernard.²⁵⁴

Eckert states that the ritual, symbols, and names of the Rose-Croix were borrowed from the Templars, and that the Order was divided into seven degrees, according

to the seven days of creation, at the same time signifying that their "principal aim was that of the mysterious, the investigation of Being and of the forces of nature."²⁵⁵

The Rosicrucian Kenneth Mackenzie, in his *Masonic Cyclopædia*, appears to suggest the same possibility of Templar origin. Under the heading of Rosicrucians he refers enigmatically to an invisible fraternity that has existed from very ancient times, as early as the days of the Crusades, "bound by solemn obligations of impenetrable secrecy," and joining together in work for humanity and to "glorify the good." At various periods of history this body has emerged into a sort of temporary light; but its true name has never transpired and is only known to the innermost adepts and rulers of the society. "The Rosicrucians of the sixteenth century finally disappeared and re-entered this invisible fraternity"—from which they had presumably emerged. Whether any such body really existed or whether the above account is simply an attempt at mystification devised to excite curiosity, the incredulous may question. The writer here observes that it would be indiscreet to say more, but elsewhere he throws out a hint that may have some bearing on the matter, for in his article on the Templars he says that after the suppression of the Order it was revived in a more secret form and subsists to the present day. This would exactly accord with Mirabeau's statement that the Rosicrucians were only the Order of the Templars secretly perpetuated. Moreover, as we shall see later, according to a legend preserved by the Royal Order of Scotland, the degree of the Rosy Cross had been instituted by that Order in conjunction with the Templars in 1314, and it would certainly be a remarkable coincidence that a man bearing the name of Rosenkreutz should happen to have inaugurated a society, founded, like the Templars, on Eastern secret doctrines during the course of the same century, without any connexion existing between the two.

I would suggest, then, that Christian Rosenkreutz was a purely mythical personage, and that the whole legend concerning his travels was invented to disguise the real sources whence the Rosicrucians derived their system, which would appear to have been a compound of ancient esoteric doctrines, of Arabian and Syrian magic, and of Jewish Cabalism, partly inherited from the Templars but reinforced by direct contact with Cabalistic Jews in Germany. The Rose-Croix, says Mirabeau, "were a mystical, Cabalistic, theological, and magical sect," and Rosicrucianism thus became in the seventeenth century the generic title by which everything of the nature of Cabalism, Theosophy, Alchemy, Astrology, and Mysticism was designated. For this reason it has been said that they cannot be regarded as the descendants of the Templars. Mr. Waite, in referring to "the alleged connexion between the Templars and the Brethren of the Rosy Cross," observes:

The Templars were not alchemists, they had no scientific pretensions, and their secret, so far as it can be ascertained, was a religious secret of an anti-Christian

kind. The Rosicrucians, on the other hand, were pre-eminently a learned society and they were also a Christian sect.²⁵⁶

The fact that the Templars do not appear to have practised alchemy is beside the point; it is not pretended that the Rosicrucians followed the Templars in every particular, but that they were the inheritors of a secret tradition passed on to them by the earlier Order. Moreover, that they were a learned society, or even a society at all, is not at all certain, for they would appear to have possessed no organization like the Templars or the Freemasons, but to have consisted rather of isolated occultists bound together by some tie of secret knowledge concerning natural phenomena. This secrecy was no doubt necessary at a period when scientific research was liable to be regarded as sorcery, but whether the Rosicrucians really accomplished anything is extremely doubtful. They are said to have been alchemists; but did they ever succeed in transmuting metals? They are described as learned, yet do the pamphlets emanating from the Fraternity betray any proof of superior knowledge? "The Chymical Marriage of Christian Rosenkreutz," which appeared in 1616, certainly appears to be the purest nonsense—magical imaginings of the most puerile kind; and Mr. Waite himself observes that the publication of the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitalis* will not add new lustre to the Rosicrucian reputations:

We are accustomed to regard the adepts of the Rosy Cross as beings of sublime elevation and preternatural physical powers, masters of Nature, monarchs of the intellectual world.... But here in their own acknowledged manifestos they avow themselves a mere theosophical offshoot of the Lutheran heresy, acknowledging the spiritual supremacy of a temporal prince, and calling the Pope anti-Christ.... We find them intemperate in their language, rabid in their religious prejudices, and instead of towering giant-like above the intellectual average of their age, we see them buffeted by the same passions and identified with all opinions of the men by whom they were environed. The voice which addresses us behind the mystical mask of the Rose-Croix does not come from an intellectual throne....

So much for the Rosicrucians as a "learned society."

What, then, of their claim to be a Christian body? The Rosicrucian student of the Cabala, Julius Sperber, in his *Echo of the Divinely Illuminated Fraternity of the Admirable Order of the R.C.* (1615), has indicated the place assigned to Christ by the Rosicrucians. In De Quincey's words:

Having maintained the probability of the Rosicrucian pretensions on the ground that such *magnalia Dei* had from the creation downwards been confided to the keeping of a few individuals—agreeably to which he affirms that Adam was the first Rosicrucian of the Old Testament and Simeon the last—he goes on to ask whether

the Gospel put an end to the secret tradition? By no means, he answers: Christ established a new "college of magic" among His disciples, and the greater mysteries were revealed to St. John and St. Paul.

John Yarker, quoting this passage, adds: "This, Brother Findel points out, was a claim of the Carpocratian Gnostics"; it was also, as we have seen, a part of the Johannite tradition which is said to have been imparted to the Templars. We shall find the same idea of Christ as an "initiate" running all through the secret societies up to the present day.

These doctrines not unnaturally brought on the Rosicrucians the suspicion of being an anti-Christian body. The writer of a contemporary pamphlet published in 1624, declares that "this fraternity is a stratagem of the Jews and Cabalistic Hebrews, in whose philosophy, says Pic de la Mirandole, all things are ... as if hidden in the majesty of truth or as ... in very sacred Mysteries."²⁵⁷

Another work, *Examination of the Unknown and Novel Cabala of the Brethren of the Rose-Cross*, agrees with the assertion that the chief of this "execrable college is Satan, that its first rule is denial of God, blasphemy against the most simple and undivided Trinity, trampling on the mysteries of the redemption, spitting in the face of the mother of God and of all the saints." The sect is further accused of compacts with the devil, sacrifices of children, of cherishing toads, making poisonous powders, dancing with fiends, etc.

Now, although all this would appear to be quite incompatible with the character of the Rosicrucians as far as it is known, we have already seen that the practices here described were by no means imaginary; in this same seventeenth century, when the fame of the Rosicrucians was first noised abroad, black magic was still, as in the days of Gilles de Rais, a horrible reality, not only in France but in England, Scotland, and Germany, where sorcerers of both sexes were continually put to death.²⁵⁸ However much we may deplore the methods employed against these people or question the supernatural origin of their cult, it would be idle to deny that the cult itself existed.

Moreover, towards the end of the century it assumed in France a very tangible form in the series of mysterious dramas known as the "Affaire des Poisons," of which the first act took place in 1666, when the celebrated Marquise de Brinvilliers embarked on her amazing career of crime in collaboration with her lover Sainte-Croix. This extraordinary woman, who for ten years made a hobby of trying the effects of various slow poisons on her nearest relations, thereby causing the death of her father and brothers, might appear to have been merely an isolated criminal of the abnormal type but for the sequel to her exploits in the epidemic of poisoning which followed and during twenty years kept Paris in a state of terror. The

investigations of the police finally led to the discovery of a whole band of magicians and alchemists—"a vast ramification of malefactors covering all France"—who specialized in the art of poisoning without fear of detection.

Concerning all these sorcerers, alchemists, compounders of magical powders and philtres, frightful rumours circulated, "pacts with the devil were talked of, sacrifices of new-born babies, incantations, sacrilegious Masses and other practices as disquieting as they were lugubrious."²⁵⁹ Even the King's mistress, Madame de Montespan, is said to have had recourse to black Masses in order to retain the royal favour through the agency of the celebrated sorceress La Voisin, with whom she was later implicated in an accusation of having attempted the life of the King.

All the extraordinary details of these events have recently been described in the book of Madame Latour, where the intimate connexion between the poisoners and the magicians is shown. In the opinion of contemporaries, these were not isolated individuals:

"Their methods were too certain, their execution of crime too skilful and too easy for them not to have belonged, either directly or indirectly, to a whole organization of criminals who prepared the way, and studied the method of giving to crime the appearance of illness, of forming, in a word, a school."²⁶⁰

The author of the work here quoted draws an interesting parallel between this organization and the modern traffic in cocaine, and goes on to describe the three degrees into which it was divided: firstly, the Heads, cultivated and intelligent men, who understood chemistry, physics, and nearly all useful sciences, "invisible counsellors but supreme, without whom the sorcerers and diviners would have been powerless"; secondly, the visible magicians employing mysterious processes, complicated rites and terrifying ceremonies; and thirdly, the crowd of nobles and plebeians who flocked to the doors of the sorcerers and filled their pockets in return for magic potions, philtres, and, in certain cases, insidious poisons. Thus La Voisin must be placed in the second category; "in spite of her luxury, her profits, and her fame," she "is only a subaltern agent in this vast organization of criminals. She depends entirely for her great enterprises on the intellectual chiefs of the corporation...."²⁶¹

Who were these intellectual chiefs? The man who first initiated Madame de Brinvilliers' lover Sainte-Croix into the art of poisoning was an Italian named Exili or Eggidi; but the real initiate from whom Eggidi and another Italian poisoner had learnt their secrets is said to have been Glaser, variously described as a German or a Swiss chemist, who followed the principles of Paracelsus and occupied the post of physician to the King and the Duc d'Orléans.²⁶² This man, about whose history

little is known, might thus have been a kind of Rosicrucian. For since, as has been said, the intellectual chiefs from whom the poisoners derived their inspiration were men versed in chemistry, in science, in physics, and the treatment of diseases, and since, further, they included alchemists and people professing to be in possession of the Philosopher's Stone, their resemblance with the Rosicrucians is at once apparent. Indeed, in turning back to the branches of magic enumerated by the Rosicrucian Robert Fludd, we find not only Natural Magic, "that most occult and secret department of physics by which the mystical properties of natural substances are extracted," but also Venefic Magic, which "is familiar with potions, philtres, and with various preparations of poisons."

The art of poisoning was therefore known to the Rosicrucians, and, although there is no reason to suppose it was ever practised by the heads of the Fraternity, it is possible that the inspirers of the poisoners may have been perverted Rosicrucians, that is to say, students of those portions of the Cabala relating to magic both of the necromantic and venefic varieties, who turned the scientific knowledge which the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross used for healing to a precisely opposite and deadly purpose. This would explain the fact that contemporaries like the author of the *Examination of the Unknown and Novel Cabala of the Brethren of the Rose-Cross* should identify these brethren with the magicians and believe them to be guilty of practices deriving from the same source as Rosicrucian knowledge—the Cabala of the Jews. Their modern admirers would, of course, declare that they were the poles asunder, the difference being between white and black magic. Huysmans, however, scoffs at this distinction and says the use of the term "white magic" was a ruse of the Rose-Croix.

But of the real doctrines of the Rosicrucians no one can speak with certainty. The whole story of the Fraternity is wrapped in mystery. Mystery was avowedly the essence of their system; their identity, their aims, their doctrines, are said to have been kept a profound secret from the world. Indeed it is said that no real Rosicrucian ever allowed himself to be known as such. As a result of this systematic method of concealment, sceptics on the one hand have declared the Rosicrucians to have been charlatans and impostors or have denied their very existence, whilst on the other hand romancers have exalted them as depositaries of supernatural wisdom. The question is further obscured by the fact that most accounts of the Fraternity—as, for example, those of Eliphas Lévi, Hargrave Jennings, Kenneth Mackenzie, Mr. A.E. Waite, Dr. Wynn Westcott, and Mr. Cadbury Jones—are the work of men claiming or believing themselves to be initiated into Rosicrucianism or other occult systems of a kindred nature and as such in possession of peculiar and exclusive knowledge. This pretension may at once be dismissed as an absurdity; nothing is easier than for anyone to make a compound out of Jewish Cabalism and Eastern theosophy and to label it Rosicrucianism, but no proof whatever exists of any affiliation between the self-

styled Rosicrucians of to-day and the seventeenth-century "Brothers of the Rosy Cross."²⁶³

In spite of Mr. Wake's claim, "The Real History of the Rosicrucians" still remains to be written, at any rate in the English language. The book he has published under this name is merely a superficial study of the question largely composed of reprints of Rosicrucian pamphlets accessible to any student. Mr. Wigston and Mrs. Pott merely echo Mr. Waite. Thus everything that has been published hitherto consists in the repetition of Rosicrucian legends or in unsubstantiated theorizings on their doctrines. What we need are facts. We want to know who were the early Rosicrucians, when the Fraternity originated, and what were its real aims. These researches must be made, not by an occultist weaving his own theories into the subject, but by a historian free from any prejudices for or against the Order, capable of weighing evidence and bringing a judicial mind to bear on the material to be found in the libraries of the Continent—notably the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris. Such a work would be a valuable contribution to the history of secret societies in our country.

But if the Continental Brethren of the Rose-Croix form but a shadowy group of "Invisibles" whose identity yet remains a mystery, the English adepts of the Order stand forth in the light of day as, philosophers well known to their age and country. That Francis Bacon was initiated into Rosicrucianism is now recognized by Freemasons, but a more definite link with the Rosicrucians of the Continent was Robert Fludd, who after travelling for six years in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain—where he formed connexions with Jewish Cabalists²⁶⁴—was visited by the German Jew Rosicrucian Michel Maier—doctor to the Emperor Rudolf—by whom he appears to have been initiated into further mysteries.

In 1616 Fludd published his *Tractatus Apologeticus*, defending the Rosicrucians against the charges of "detestable magic and diabolical superstition" brought against them by Libavius. Twelve years later Fludd was attacked by Father Mersenne, to whom a reply was made "by Fludd or a friend of Fludd's" containing a further defence of the Order. "The Book," says Mr. Waite, "treats of the noble art of magic, the foundation and nature of the Cabala, the essence of veritable alchemy, and of the Causa Fratrum Rosae Crucis. It identifies the palace or home of the Rosicrucians with the Scriptural House of Wisdom."

In further works by English writers the Eastern origin of the Fraternity is insisted on. Thus Thomas Vaughan, known as Eugenius Philalethes, writing in praise of the Rosicrucians in 1652, says that "their knowledge at first was not purchased by their own disquisitions, for they received it from the Arabians, amongst whom it remained as the monument and legacy of the Children of the East. Nor is this at all improbable, for the Eastern countries have been always famous for magical and

secret societies."

Another apologist of the Rosicrucians, John Heydon, who travelled in Egypt, Persia, and Arabia, is described by a contemporary as having been in "many strange places among the Rosie Crucians and at their castles, holy houses, temples, sepulchres, sacrifices." Heydon himself, whilst declaring that he is not a Rosicrucian, says that he knows members of the Fraternity and its secrets, that they are sons of Moses, and that "this Rosie Crucian Physick or Medicine, I happily and unexpectedly alight upon in Arabia." These references to castles, temples, sacrifices, encountered in Egypt, Persia, and Arabia inevitably recall memories of both Templars and Ismailis. Is there no connexion between "the Invisible Mountains of the Brethren" referred to elsewhere by Heydon and the Mountains of the Assassins and the Freemasons? between the Scriptural "House of Wisdom" and the Dar-ul-Hikmat or Grand Lodge of Cairo, the model for Western masonic lodges?

It is as the precursors of the crisis which arose in 1717 that the English Rosicrucians of the seventeenth century are of supreme importance. No longer need we concern ourselves with shadowy Brethren laying dubious claim to supernatural wisdom, but with a concrete association of professed Initiates proclaiming their existence to the world under the name of Freemasonry.

5. ORIGINS OF FREEMASONRY

"The origin of Freemasonry," says a masonic writer of the eighteenth century, "is known to Freemasons alone."²⁶⁵ If this was once the case, it is so no longer, for, although the question would certainly appear to be one on which the initiated should be most qualified to speak, the fact is that no official theory on the origin of Freemasonry exists; the great mass of the Freemasons do *not* know or care to know anything about the history of their Order, whilst Masonic authorities are entirely disagreed on the matter. Dr. Mackey admits that "the origin and source whence first sprang the institution of Freemasonry has given rise to more difference of opinion and discussion among masonic scholars than any other topic in the literature of the institution."²⁶⁶ Nor is this ignorance maintained merely in books for the general public, since in those specially addressed to the Craft and at discussions in lodges the same diversity of opinion prevails, and no decisive conclusions appear to be reached. Thus Mr. Albert Churchward, a Freemason of the thirtieth degree, who deplors the small amount of interest taken in this matter

by Masons in general, observes:

Hitherto there have been so many contradictory opinions and theories in the attempt to supply the origin and the reason whence, where, and why the Brotherhood of Freemasonry came into existence, and all the "different parts" and various rituals of the "different degrees." All that has been written on this has hitherto been *theories*, without any facts for their foundation.²⁶⁷

In the absence, therefore, of any origin universally recognized by the Craft, it is surely open to the lay mind to speculate on the matter and to draw conclusions from history as to which of the many explanations put forward seems to supply the key to the mystery.

According to the *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia*, no less than twelve theories have been advanced as to the origins of the Order, namely, that Masonry derived:

"(1) From the patriarchs. (2) From the mysteries of the pagans. (3) From the construction of Solomon's Temple, (4) From the Crusades. (5) From the Knights Templar. (6) From the Roman Collegia of Artificers. (7) From the operative masons of the Middle Ages. (8) From the Rosicrucians of the sixteenth century. (9) From Oliver Cromwell. (10) From Prince Charles Stuart for political purposes. (11) From Sir Christopher Wren, at the building of St. Paul's. (12) From Dr. Desaguliers and his friends in 1717."

This enumeration is, however, misleading, for it implies that in *one* of these various theories the true origin of Freemasonry may be found. In reality modern Freemasonry is a dual system, a blend of two distinct traditions—of operative masonry, that is to say the actual art of building, and of speculative theory on the great truths of life and death. As a well-known Freemason, the Count Goblet d'Alviella, has expressed it: "Speculative Masonry" (that is to say, the dual system we now know as Freemasonry) "is the legitimate offspring of a fruitful union between the professional guild of mediæval Masons and of a secret group of philosophical Adepts, the first having furnished the form and the second the spirit."²⁶⁸ In studying the origins of the present system we have therefore (1) to examine separately the history of each of these two traditions, and (2) to discover their point of junction.

OPERATIVE MASONRY

Beginning with the first of these two traditions, we find that guilds of working masons existed in very ancient times. Without going back as far as ancient Egypt or Greece, which would be beyond the scope of the present work, the course of these associations may be traced throughout the history of Western Europe from

the beginning of the Christian era. According to certain masonic writers, the Druids originally came from Egypt and brought with them traditions relating to the art of building. The *Culdees*, who later on established schools and colleges in this country for the teaching of arts, sciences, and handicrafts, are said to have derived from the Druids.

But a more probable source of inspiration in the art of building are the Romans, who established the famous *collegia* of architects referred to in the list of alternative theories given in the *Masonic Cyclopædia*. Advocates of the Roman *Collegia* origin of Freemasonry might be right as far as operative masonry is concerned, for it is to the period following on the Roman occupation of Britain that our masonic guilds can with the greatest degree of certainty be traced. Owing to the importance the art of building now acquired it is said that many distinguished men, such as St. Alban, King Alfred, King Edwin, and King Athelstan, were numbered amongst its patrons,²⁶⁹ so that in time the guilds came to occupy the position of privileged bodies and were known as "free corporations"; further that York was the first masonic centre in England, largely under the control of the *Culdees*, who at the same period exercised much influence over the Masonic *Collegia* in Scotland, at Kilwinning, Melrose, and Aberdeen.²⁷⁰

But it must be remembered that all this is speculation. No documentary evidence has ever been produced to prove the existence of masonic guilds before the famous York charter of A.D. 936, and even the date of this document is doubtful. Only with the period of Gothic architecture do we reach firm ground. That guilds of working masons known in France as "*Compagnonnages*" and in Germany as "*Steinmetzen*" did then form close corporations and possibly possess secrets connected with their profession is more than probable. That, in consequence of their skill in building the magnificent cathedrals of this period, they now came to occupy a privileged position seems fairly certain.

The Abbé Grandidier, writing from Strasbourg in 1778, traces the whole system of Freemasonry from these German guilds: "This much-vaunted Society of Freemasons is nothing but a servile imitation of an ancient and useful *confrérie* of real masons whose headquarters was formerly at Strasbourg and of which the constitution was confirmed by the Emperor Maximilian in 1498."²⁷¹

As far as it is possible to discover from the scanty documentary evidence the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries provide, the same privileges appear to have been accorded to the guilds of working masons in England and Scotland, which, although presided over by powerful nobles and apparently on occasion admitting members from outside the Craft, remained essentially operative bodies. Nevertheless we find the assemblies of Masons suppressed by Act of Parliament in the beginning of the reign of Henry VI, and later on an armed force sent by Queen

Elizabeth to break up the Annual Grand Lodge at York. It is possible that the fraternity merely by the secrecy with which it was surrounded excited the suspicions of authority, for nothing could be more law-abiding than its published statutes. Masons were to be "true men to God and the Holy Church," also to the masters that they served. They were to be honest in their manner of life and "to do no villainy whereby the Craft or the Science may be slandered."²⁷²

Yet the seventeenth-century writer Plot, in his *Natural History of Staffordshire*, expresses some suspicion with regard to the secrets of Freemasonry. That these could not be merely trade secrets relating to the art of building, but that already some speculative element had been introduced to the lodges, seems the more probable from the fact that by the middle of the seventeenth century not only noble patrons headed the Craft, but ordinary gentlemen entirely unconnected with building were received into the fraternity. The well-known entry in the diary of Elias Ashmole under the date of October 16, 1646, clearly proves this fact: "I was made a Freemason at Warrington in Lancashire with Col. Henry Mainwaring of Karticham [?] in Cheshire. The names of those that were then of the Lodge, Mr. Rich. Penket, Warden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Rich. Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, Rich. Ellam and Hugh Brewer."²⁷³ "It is now ascertained," says Yarker, "that the majority of the members present were not operative masons."²⁷⁴

Again, in 1682 Ashmole relates that he attended a meeting held at Mason Hall in London, where with a number of other gentlemen he was admitted into "the Fellowship of the Freemasons," that is to say, into the second degree. We have then clear proof that already in the seventeenth century Freemasonry had ceased to be an association composed exclusively of men concerned with building, although eminent architects ranked high in the Order; Inigo Jones is said to have been Grand Master under James I, and Sir Christopher Wren to have occupied the same position from about 1685 to 1702. But it was not until 1703 that the Lodge of St. Paul in London officially announced "that the privileges of Masonry should no longer be restricted to operative Masons, but extended to men of various professions, provided they were regularly approved and initiated into the Order."²⁷⁵

This was followed in 1717 by the great *coup d'état* when Grand Lodge was founded, and Speculative Masonry, which we now know as Freemasonry, was established on a settled basis with a ritual, rules, and constitution drawn up in due form. It is at this important date that the official history of Freemasonry begins.

But before pursuing the course of the Order through what is known as the "Grand Lodge Era," it is necessary to go back and enquire into the origins of the philosophy that was now combined with the system of operative masonry. This is the point on which opinions are divided and to which the various theories summarized in the *Masonic Cyclopædia* relate. Let us examine each of these in

turn.

SPECULATIVE MASONRY

According to certain sceptics concerning the mysteries of Freemasonry, the system inaugurated in 1717 had no existence before that date, but "was devised, promulgated, and palmed upon the world by Dr. Desaguliers, Dr. Anderson, and others, who then founded the Grand Lodge of England." Mr. Paton, in an admirable little pamphlet,²⁷⁶ has shown the futility of this contention and also the injustice of representing the founders of Grand Lodge as perpetrating so gross a deception.

This 1717 theory ascribes to men of the highest character the invention of a system of mere imposture.... It was brought forward with pretensions which its framers knew to be false pretensions of high antiquity; whereas ... it had newly been invented in their studies. Is this likely? Or is it reasonable to ascribe such conduct to honourable men, without even assigning a probable motive for it?

We have indeed only to study masonic ritual—which is open to everyone to read—in order to arrive at the same conclusion, that there could be no motive for this imposture, and further that these two clergymen cannot be supposed to have evolved the whole thing out of their heads. Obviously some movement of a kindred nature must have led up to this crisis. And since Elias Ashmole's diary clearly proves that a ceremony of masonic initiation had existed in the preceding century, it is surely only reasonable to conclude that Drs. Anderson and Desaguliers revised but did not originate the ritual and constitutions drawn up by them.

Now, although the ritual of Freemasonry is couched in modern and by no means classical English, the ideas running through it certainly bear traces of extreme antiquity. The central idea of Freemasonry concerning a loss which has befallen man and the hope of its ultimate recovery is in fact no other than the ancient secret tradition described in the first chapter of this book. Certain masonic writers indeed ascribe to Freemasonry precisely the same genealogy as that of the early Cabala, declaring that it descended from Adam and the first patriarchs of the human race, and thence through groups of Wise Men amongst the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians, and Greeks.²⁷⁷ Mr. Albert Churchward insists particularly on the Egyptian origin of the speculative element in Freemasonry: "Brother Gould and other Freemasons will never understand the meaning and origin of our sacred tenets till they have studied and unlocked the mysteries of the past." This study will then reveal the fact that "the Druids, the Gymnosophists of India, the Magi of Persia, and the Chaldeans of Assyria had all the same religious rites and ceremonies as practised by their priests who were initiated to their Order, and that these were solemnly sworn to keep the doctrines a profound secret from the rest of

mankind. All these flowed from one source—Egypt."²⁷⁸

Mr. Churchward further quotes the speech of the Rev. Dr. William Dodd at the opening of a masonic temple in 1794, who traced Freemasonry from "the first astronomers on the plains of Chaldea, the wise and mystic kings and priests of Egypt, the sages of Greece and philosophers of Rome," etc.²⁷⁹

But how did these traditions descend to the masons of the West? According to a large body of masonic opinion in this country which recognizes only a single source of inspiration to the system we now know as Freemasonry, the speculative as well as the operative traditions of the Order descended from the building guilds and were imported to England by means of the Roman Collegia. Mr. Churchward, however, strongly dissents from this view:

In the new and revised edition of the Perfect Ceremonies, according to our E. working, a theory is given that Freemasonry originated from certain guilds of workmen which are well known in history as the "Roman College of Artificers." There is no foundation of fact for such a theory. Freemasonry is now, and always was, an Eschatology, as may be proved by the whole of our signs, symbols, and words, and our rituals.²⁸⁰

But what Mr. Churchward fails to explain is how this eschatology reached the working masons; moreover why, if as he asserts, it derived from Egypt, Assyria, India, and Persia, Freemasonry no longer bears the stamp of these countries. For although vestiges of Sabeism may be found in the decoration of the lodges, and brief references to the mysteries of Egypt and Phœnicia, to the secret teaching of Pythagoras, to Euclid, and to Plato in the Ritual and instructions of the Craft degrees—nevertheless the form in which the ancient tradition is clothed, the phraseology and pass-words employed, are neither Egyptian, Chaldean, Greek, nor Persian, but Judaic. Thus although some portion of the ancient secret tradition may have penetrated to Great Britain through the Druids or the Romans—versed in the lore of Greece and Egypt—another channel for its introduction was clearly the Cabala of the Jews. Certain masonic writers recognize this double tradition, the one descending from Egypt, Chaldea, and Greece, the other from the Israelites, and assert that it is from the latter source their system is derived.²⁸¹ For after tracing its origin from Adam, Noah, Enoch, and Abraham, they proceed to show its line of descent through Moses, David, and Solomon²⁸²—descent from Solomon is in fact officially recognized by the Craft and forms a part of the instructions to candidates for initiation into the first degree. But, as we have already seen, this is the precise genealogy attributed to the Cabala by the Jews. Moreover, modern Freemasonry is entirely built up on the Solomonic, or rather the Hiramic legend. For the sake of readers unfamiliar with the ritual of Freemasonry a brief *résumé* of

this "Grand Legend" must be given here.

Solomon, when building the Temple, employed the services of a certain artificer in brass, named Hiram, the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphthali, who was sent to him by Hiram, King of Tyre. So much we know from the Book of Kings, but the masonic legend goes on to relate that Hiram, the widow's son, referred to as Hiram Abiff, and described as the master-builder, met with an untimely end. For the purpose of preserving order the masons working on the Temple were divided into three classes, Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts, and Master Masons, the first two distinguished by different pass-words and grips and paid at different rates of wages, the last consisting only of three persons—Solomon himself, Hiram King of Tyre, who had provided him with wood and precious stones and Hiram Abiff. Now, before the completion of the Temple fifteen of the Fellow Crafts conspired together to find out the secrets of the Master Masons and resolved to waylay Hiram Abiff at the door of the Temple.

At the last moment twelve of the fifteen drew back, but the remaining three carried out the fell design, and after threatening Hiram in vain in order to obtain the secrets, killed him with three blows on the head, delivered by each in turn. They then conveyed the body away and buried it on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Solomon, informed of the disappearance of the master-builder, sent out fifteen Fellow Crafts to seek for him; five of these, having arrived at the mountain, noticed a place where the earth had been disturbed and there discovered the body of Hiram. Leaving a branch of acacia to mark the spot, they returned with their story to Solomon, who ordered them to go and exhume the body—an order that was immediately carried out.

The murder and exhumation, or "raising," of Hiram, accompanied by extraordinary lamentations, form the climax of Craft Masonry; and when it is remembered that in all probability no such, tragedy ever took place, that possibly no one known as Hiram Abiff ever existed,²⁸³ the whole story can only be regarded as the survival of some ancient cult relating not to an actual event, but to an esoteric doctrine. A legend and a ceremony of this kind is indeed to be found in many earlier mythologies; the story of the murder of Hiram had been foreshadowed by the Egyptian legend of the murder of Osiris and the quest for his body by Isis, whilst the lamentations around the tomb of Hiram had a counterpart in the mourning ceremonies for Osiris and Adonis—both, like Hiram, subsequently "raised"—and later on in that which took place around the catafalque of Manes, who, like Hiram, was barbarously put to death and is said to have been known to the Manicheans as "the son of the widow." But in the form given to it by Freemasonry the legend is purely Judaic, and would therefore appear to have derived from the Judaic version of the ancient tradition. The pillars of the Temple, Jachin and Boaz, which play so important a part in Craft Masonry, are symbols

which occur in the Jewish Cabala, where they are described as two of the ten Sephiroths.²⁸⁴ A writer of the eighteenth century, referring to "fyve curiosities" he has discovered in Scotland, describes one as—

The Mason word, which tho' some make a Misterie of it, I will not conceal a little of what I know. It is lyke a Rabbinical Tradition in way of Comment on Jachin and Boaz, the Two Pillars erected in Solomon's Temple with ane Addition delyvered from Hand to Hand, by which they know and become familiar one with another.²⁸⁵

This is precisely the system by which the Cabala was handed down amongst the Jews. The *Jewish Encyclopædia* lends colour to the theory of Cabalistic transmission by suggesting that the story of Hiram "may possibly trace back to the Rabbinic legend concerning the Temple of Solomon," that "while all the workmen were killed so that they should not build another temple devoted to idolatry, Hiram himself was raised to Heaven like Enoch."²⁸⁶

How did this Rabbinic legend find its way into Freemasonry? Advocates of the Roman Collegia theory explain it in the following manner.

After the building of the Temple of Solomon the masons who had been engaged in the work were dispersed and a number made their way to Europe, some to Marseilles, some perhaps to Rome, where they may have introduced Judaic legends to the Collegia, which then passed on to the Comacini Masters of the seventh century and from these to the mediæval working guilds of England, France, and Germany. It is said that during the Middle Ages a story concerning the Temple of Solomon was current amongst the *compagnonnages* of France. In one of these groups, known as "the children of Solomon," the legend of Hiram appears to have existed much in its present form; according to another group the victim of the murder was not Hiram Abiff, but one of his companions named Maître Jacques, who, whilst engaged with Hiram on the construction of the Temple, met his death at the hands of five wicked Fellow Crafts, instigated by a sixth, the Père Soubise.²⁸⁷

But the date at which this legend originated is unknown. Clavel thinks that the "Hebraic mysteries" existed as early as the Roman Collegia, which he describes as largely Judaized²⁸⁸; Yarker expresses precisely the opposite view: "It is not so difficult to connect Freemasonry with the Collegia; the difficulty lies in attributing Jewish traditions to the Collegia, and we say on the evidence of the oldest charges that such traditions had no existence in Saxon times."²⁸⁹ Again: "So far as this country is concerned, we know nothing from documents of a Masonry dating from Solomon's Temple until after the Crusades, when the constitution believed to have been sanctioned by King Athelstan gradually underwent a change."²⁹⁰ In a discussion which took place recently at the Quatuor Coronati Lodge the Hiram

legend could only be traced back—and then without absolute certainty—to the fourteenth century, which would coincide with the date indicated by Yarker.²⁹¹

Up to this period the lore of the masonic guilds appears to have contained only the exoteric doctrines of Egypt and Greece—which may have reached them through the Roman Collegia, whilst the traditions of Masonry are traced from Adam, Jabal, Tubal Cain, from Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, with Hermes and Pythagoras as their more immediate progenitors.²⁹² These doctrines were evidently in the main geometrical or technical, and in no sense Cabalistic. There is therefore some justification for Eckert's statement that "the Judeo-Christian mysteries were not yet introduced into the masonic corporations; nowhere can we find the least trace of them. Nowhere do we find any classification, not even that of masters, fellow-crafts, and apprentices. We observe no symbol of the Temple of Solomon; all their symbolism relates to masonic labours and to a few philosophical maxims of morality."²⁹³ The date at which Eckert, like Yarker, places the introduction of these Judaic elements is the time of the Crusades.

But whilst recognizing that modern Craft Masonry is largely founded on the Cabala, it is necessary to distinguish between the different Cabalas. For by this date no less than three Cabalas appear to have existed: firstly, the ancient secret tradition of the patriarchs handed down from the Egyptians through the Greeks and Romans, and possibly through the Roman Collegia to the Craft Masons of Britain; secondly, the Jewish version of this tradition, the first Cabala of the Jews, in no way incompatible with Christianity, descending from Moses, David and Solomon to the Essenes and the more enlightened Jews; and thirdly, the perverted Cabala, mingled by the Rabbis with magic, barbaric superstitions, and—after the death of Christ—with anti-Christian legends.

Whatever Cabalistic elements were introduced into Craft Masonry at the time of the Crusades appear to have belonged to the second of these traditions, the unperverted Cabala of the Jews, known to the Essenes. There are, in fact, striking resemblances between Freemasonry and Essenism—degrees of initiation, oaths of secrecy, the wearing of the apron, and a certain masonic sign; whilst to the Sabeist traditions of the Essenes may perhaps be traced the solar and stellar symbolism of the lodges.²⁹⁴ The Hiram legend may have belonged to the same tradition.

THE TEMPLAR TRADITION

If then no documentary evidence can be brought forward to show that either the Solomonic legend or any traces of Judaic symbolism and traditions existed either in the monuments of the period or in the ritual of the masons before the fourteenth century, it is surely reasonable to recognize the plausibility of the contention put forward by a great number of masonic writers—particularly on the Continent—that

the Judaic elements penetrated into Masonry by means of the Templars.²⁹⁵ The Templars, as we have already seen, had taken their name from the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. What then more likely than that during the time they had lived there they had learnt the Rabbinical legends connected with the Temple? According to George Sand, who was deeply versed in the history of secret societies, the Hiramic legend was adopted by the Templars as symbolic of the destruction of their Order. "They wept over their impotence in the person of Hiram. The word lost and recovered is their empire...."²⁹⁶ The Freemason Ragon likewise declares that the catastrophe they lamented was the catastrophe that destroyed their Order.²⁹⁷ Further, the Grand Master whose fate they deplored was Jacques du Molay. Here then we have two bodies in France at the same period, the Templars and the *compagnonnages*, both possessing a legend concerning the Temple of Solomon and both mourning a Maître Jacques who had been barbarously put to death. If we accept the possibility that the Hiramic legend existed amongst the masons before the Crusades, how are we to explain this extraordinary coincidence? It is certainly easier to believe that the Judaic traditions were introduced to the masons by the Templars and grafted on to the ancient lore that the masonic guilds had inherited from the Roman Collegia.

That some connexion existed between the Templars and the working masons is indicated by the new influence that entered into building at this period. A modern Freemason comparing "the beautifully designed and deep-cut marks of the true Gothic period, say circa 1150-1350," with "the careless and roughly executed marks, many of them mere scratches, of later periods," points out that "the Knights Templars rose and fell with that wonderful development of architecture." The same writer goes on to show that some of the most important masonic symbols, the equilateral triangle and the Mason's square surmounting two pillars, came through from Gothic times.²⁹⁸ Yarker asserts that the level, the flaming star, and the Tau cross which have since passed into the symbolism of Freemasonry may be traced to the Knights Templar, as also the five-pointed star in Salisbury Cathedral, the double triangle in Westminster Abbey, Jachin and Boaz, the circle and the pentagon in the masonry of the fourteenth century. Yarker cites later, in 1556, the eye and crescent moon, the three stars and the ladder of five steps, as further evidences of Templar influence.²⁹⁹ "The Templars were large builders, and Jacques du Molay alleged the zeal of his Order in decorating churches in the process against him in 1310; hence the alleged connexion of Templary and Freemasonry is bound to have a substratum of truth."³⁰⁰

Moreover, according to a masonic tradition, an alliance definitely took place between the Templars and the masonic guilds at this period. During the proceedings taken against the Order of the Temple in France it is said that Pierre d'Aumont and seven other Knights escaped to Scotland in the guise of working masons and landed in the Island of Mull. On St. John's Day, 1307, they held their

first chapter. Robert Bruce then took them under his protection, and seven years later they fought under his standard at Bannockburn against Edward II, who had suppressed their Order in England. After this battle, which took place on St. John the Baptist's Day in summer (June 24), Robert Bruce is said to have instituted the Royal Order of H.R.M. (Heredom) and Knights of the R.S.Y.C.S. (Rosy Cross).³⁰¹ These two degrees now constitute the Royal Order of Scotland, and it seems not improbable that in reality they were brought to Scotland by the Templars. Thus, according to one of the early writers on Freemasonry, the degree of the Rose-Croix originated with the Templars in Palestine as early as 1188³⁰²; whilst the Eastern origin of the word Heredom, supposed to derive from a mythical mountain on an island south of the Hebrides³⁰³ where the Culdees practised their rites, is indicated by another eighteenth-century writer, who traces it to a Jewish source.³⁰⁴ In this same year of 1314 Robert Bruce is said to have united the Templars and the Royal Order of H.R.M. with the guilds of working masons, who had also fought in his army, at the famous Lodge of Kilwinning, founded in 1286,³⁰⁵ which now added to its name that of Heredom and became the chief seat of the Order.³⁰⁶ Scotland was essentially a home of operative masonry, and, in view of the Templar's prowess in the art of building, what more natural than that the two bodies should enter into an alliance? Already in England the Temple is said between 1155 and 1199 to have administered the Craft.³⁰⁷ It is thus at Heredom of Kilwinning, "the Holy House of Masonry"—"Mother Kilwinning," as it is still known to Freemasons—that a speculative element of a fresh kind may have found its way into the lodges. Is it not here, then, that we may see that "fruitful union between the professional guild of mediæval masons and a secret group of philosophical Adepts" alluded to by Count Goblet d'Aviella and described by Mr. Waite in the following words:

The mystery of the building guilds—whatever it may be held to have been—was that of a simple, unpolished, pious, and utilitarian device; and this daughter of Nature, in the absence of all intention on her own part, underwent, or was coerced into one of the strangest marriages which has been celebrated in occult history. It so happened that her particular form and figure lent itself to such a union, etc.³⁰⁸

Mr. Waite with his usual vagueness does not explain when and where this marriage took place, but the account would certainly apply to the alliance between the Templars and Scottish guilds of working masons, which, as we have seen, is admitted by masonic authorities, and presents exactly the conditions described, the Templars being peculiarly fitted by their initiation into the legend concerning the building of the Temple of Solomon to co-operate with the masons, and the masons being prepared by their partial initiation into ancient mysteries to receive the fresh influx of Eastern tradition from the Templars.

A further indication of the Templar influence in Craft Masonry is the system of degrees and initiations. The names of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and

Master Mason are said to have derived from Scotland,³⁰⁹ and the analogy between these and the degrees of the Assassins has already been shown. Indeed, the resemblance between the outer organization of Freemasonry and the system of the Ismailis is shown by many writers. Thus Dr. Bussell observes: "No doubt together with some knowledge of geometry regarded as an esoteric trade secret, many symbols to-day current did pass down from very primitive times. But a more certain model was the Grand Lodge of the Ismailis in Cairo"—that is to say the Dar-ul-Hikmat.³¹⁰ Syed Ameer Ali also expresses the opinion that "Makrisi's account of the different degrees of initiation adopted in this lodge forms an invaluable record of Freemasonry. In fact, the lodge at Cairo became the model of all the Lodges created afterwards in Christendom."³¹¹ Mr. Bernard Springett, a Freemason, quoting this passage, adds: "In this last assertion I am myself greatly in agreement."³¹²

It is surely therefore legitimate to surmise that this system penetrated to Craft Masonry through the Templars, whose connexion with the Assassins—offshoot of the Dar-ul-Hikmat—was a matter of common knowledge.

The question of the Templar succession in Freemasonry forms perhaps the most controversial point in the whole history of the Roman Collegia theory, Continental Masons more generally accepting it, and even glorying in it.³¹³ Mackey, in his *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, thus sums up the matter:

The connexion between the Knights Templar and the Freemasons has been repeatedly asserted by the enemies of both institutions, and has often been admitted by their friends. Lawrie, on this subject, holds the following language: "We know that the Knights Templar not only possessed the mysteries but performed the ceremonies and inculcated the duties of Freemasons," and he attributes the dissolution of the Order to the discovery of their being Freemasons and their assembling in secret to practise the rites of the Order.³¹⁴

This explains why Freemasons have always shown indulgence to the Templars.

It was above all Freemasonry [says Findel], which—because it falsely held itself to be a daughter of Templarism—took the greatest pains to represent the Order of the Templars as innocent and therefore free from all mystery. For this purpose not only legends and unhistorical facts were brought forward, but manœuvres were also resorted to in order to suppress the truth. The masonic reverers of the Temple Order bought up the whole edition of the *Actes du Procès* of Moldenhawer, because this showed the guilt of the Order; only a few copies reached the booksellers.... Already several decades before ... the Freemasons in their unhistorical efforts had been guilty of real forgery. Dupuy had published his *History of the Trial of the Templars* as early as 1654 in Paris, for which he had

made use of the original of the *Actes du Procès*, according to which the guilt of the Order leaves no room for doubt.... But when in the middle of the eighteenth century several branches of Freemasonry wished to recall the Templar Order into being, the work of Dupuy was naturally very displeasing. It had already been current amongst the public for a hundred years, so it could no longer be bought; therefore they falsified it.³¹⁵

Accordingly in 1751 a reprint of Dupuy's work appeared with the addition of a number of notes and remarks and mutilated in such a way as to prove not the guilt but the innocence of the Templars.

Now, although British Masonry has played no part in these intrigues, the question of the Templar succession has been very inadequately dealt with by the masonic writers of our country. As a rule they have adopted one of two courses—either they have persistently denied connexion with the Templars or they have represented them as a blameless and cruelly maligned Order. But in reality neither of these expedients is necessary to save the honour of British Masonry, for not even the bitterest enemy of Masonry has ever suggested that British masons have adopted any portion of the Templar heresy. The Knights who fled to Scotland may have been perfectly innocent of the charges brought against their Order; indeed, there is good reason to believe this was the case. Thus the *Manuel des Chevaliers de l'Ordre du Temple* relates the incident in the following manner:

After the death of Jacques du Molay, some Scottish Templars having become apostates, at the instigation of Robert Bruce ranged themselves under the banners of a new Order³¹⁶ instituted by this prince and in which the receptions were based on those of the Order of the Temple. It is there that we must seek the origin of Scottish Masonry and even that of the other masonic rites. The Scottish Templars were excommunicated in 1324 by Larmenius, who declared them to be *Templi desertores* and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, *Dominiorum Militiæ spoliatores*, placed for ever outside the pale of the Temple: *Extra girum Templi, nunc et in futurum, volo, dico et jubeo*. A similar anathema has since been launched by several Grand Masters against Templars who were rebellious to legitimate authority. From the schism that was introduced into Scotland a number of sects took birth.³¹⁷

This account forms a complete exoneration of the Scottish Templars; as apostates from the bogus Christian Church and the doctrines of Johannism they showed themselves loyal to the true Church and to the Christian faith as formulated in the published statutes of their Order. What they appear, then, to have introduced to Masonry was their manner of reception, that is to say their outer forms and organization, and possibly certain Eastern esoteric doctrines and Judaic legends concerning the building of the Temple of Solomon in no way incompatible with the

teaching of Christianity.

It will be noticed, moreover, that in the ban passed by the *Ordre du Temple* on the Scottish Templars the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem are also included. This is a further tribute to the orthodoxy of the Scottish Knights. For to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem—to whom the Templar property was given—no suspicion of heresy had ever attached. After the suppression of the Order of the Temple in 1312 a number of the Knights joined themselves to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, by whom the Templar system appears to have been purged of its heretical elements. As we shall see later, the same process is said to have been carried out by the Royal Order of Scotland. All this suggests that the Templars had imported a secret doctrine from the East which was capable either of a Christian or an anti-Christian interpretation, that through their connexion with the Royal Order of Scotland and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem this Christian interpretation was preserved, and finally that it was this pure doctrine which passed into Freemasonry. According to early masonic authorities, the adoption of the two St. Johns as the patron saints of Masonry arose, not from Johannism, but from the alliance between the Templars and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.³¹⁸

It is important to remember that the theory of the Templar connexion with Freemasonry was held by the Continental Freemasons of the eighteenth century, who, living at the time the Order was reconstituted on its present basis, were clearly in a better position to know its origins than we who are separated from that date by a distance of two hundred years. But since their testimony first comes to light at the period of the upper degrees, in which the Templar influence is more clearly visible than in Craft Masonry, it must be reserved for a later chapter. Before passing on to this further stage in the history of the Craft, it is necessary to consider one more link in the chain of the masonic tradition—the "Holy Vehm."

THE VEHMGERICHTS³¹⁹

These dread tribunals, said to have been established by Charlemagne in 772³²⁰ in Westphalia, had for their avowed object the establishment of law and order amidst the unsettled and even anarchic conditions that then reigned in Germany. But by degrees the power arrogated to itself by the "Holy Vehm" became so formidable that succeeding emperors were unable to control its workings and found themselves forced to become initiates from motives of self-protection. During the twelfth century the Vehmgerichts, by their continual executions, had created a veritable "Red Terror," so that the East of Germany was known as the Red Land. In 1371, says Lecouteulx de Canteleu, a fresh impetus was given to the "Holy Vehm" by a number of the Knights Templar who, on the dissolution of their Order, had found their way to Germany and now sought admission to the Secret Tribunals.³²¹ How much of Templar lore passed into the hand of the Vehmgerichts it is

impossible to know, but there is certainly a resemblance between the methods of initiation and intimidation employed by the Vehms and those described by certain of the Templars, still more between the ceremony of the Vehms and the ritual of Freemasonry.

Thus the members of the Vehms, known as the *Wissende* (or Enlightened), were divided into three degrees of initiation: the Free Judges, the veritable Free Judges, and the Holy Judges of the Secret Tribunal. The candidate for initiation was led blindfold before the dread Tribunal, presided over by a *Stuhlherr* (or master of the chair) or his substitute, a *Freigraf*, with a sword and branch of willow at his side. The initiate was then bound by a terrible oath not to reveal the secrets of the "Holy Vehm," to warn no one of danger threatening them by its decrees, to denounce anyone, whether father, mother, brother, sister, friend, or relation, if such a one had been condemned by the Tribunal. After this he was given the password and grip by which the confederates recognized each other. In the event of his turning traitor or revealing the secrets confided to him his eyes were bandaged, his hands tied behind his back, and his tongue was torn out through the back of his neck, after which he was hanged by the feet till he was dead, with the solemn imprecation that his body should be given as a prey to the birds of the air.

It is difficult to believe that the points of resemblance with modern masonic ritual³²² which may here be discerned can be a mere matter of coincidence, yet it would be equally unreasonable to trace the origins of Freemasonry to the Vehmgerichts. Clearly both derived from a common source, either the old pagan traditions on which the early Vehms were founded or the system of the Templars. The latter seems the more probable for two reasons: firstly, on account of the resemblance between the methods of the Vehmgerichts and the Assassins, which would be explained if the Templars formed the connecting link; and secondly, the fact that in contemporary documents the members of the Secret Tribunals were frequently referred to under the name of Rose-Croix.³²³ Now, since, as we have seen, the degree of the Rosy Cross is said to have been brought to Europe by the Templars, this would account for the persistence of the name in the Vehmgerichts as well as in the Rosicrucians of the seventeenth century, who are said to have continued the Templar tradition. Thus Templarism and Rosicrucianism appear to have been always closely connected, a fact which is not surprising since both derive from a common source—the traditions of the near East.

This brings us to an alternative theory concerning the channel through which Eastern doctrines, and particularly Cabalism, found their way into Freemasonry. For it must be admitted that one obstacle to the complete acceptance of the theory of the Templar succession exists, namely, that although the Judaic element cannot be traced further back than the Crusades, neither can it with certainty be pronounced to have come into existence during the three centuries that followed

after. Indeed, before the publication of Anderson's "Constitutions" in 1723 there is no definite evidence that the Solomonic legend had been incorporated into the ritual of British Masonry. So although the possession of the legend by the *compagnonnages* of the Middle Ages would tend to prove its antiquity, there is always the possibility that it was introduced by some later body of adepts than the Templars. According to the partisans of a further theory, these adepts were the Rosicrucians.

ROSICRUCIAN ORIGIN

One of the earliest and most eminent precursors of Freemasonry is said to have been Francis Bacon. As we have already seen, Bacon is recognized to have been a Rosicrucian, and that the secret philosophical doctrine he professed was closely akin to Freemasonry is clearly apparent in his *New Atlantis*. The reference to the "Wise Men of the Society of Solomon's House" cannot be a mere coincidence. The choice of Atlantis—the legendary island supposed to have been submerged by the Atlantic Ocean in the remote past—would suggest that Bacon had some knowledge of a secret tradition descending from the earliest patriarchs of the human race, whom, like the modern writer Le Plongeon, he imagined to have inhabited the Western hemisphere and to have been the predecessors of the Egyptian initiates. Le Plongeon, however, places this early seat of the mysteries still further West than the Atlantic Ocean, in the region of Mayax and Yucatan.³²⁴

Bacon further relates that this tradition was preserved in its pure form by certain of the Jews, who, whilst accepting the Cabala, rejected its anti-Christian tendencies. Thus in this island of Bensalem there are Jews "of a far differing disposition from the Jews in other parts. For whereas they hate the name of Christ, and have a secret inbred rancour against the people amongst whom they live; these contrariwise give unto our Saviour many high attributes," but at the same time they believe "that Moses by a secret Cabala ordained the laws of Bensalem which they now use, and that when the Messiah should come and sit on His throne at Jerusalem, the King of Bensalem should sit at His feet, whereas other kings should keep at a great distance." This passage is of particular interest as showing that Bacon recognized the divergence between the ancient secret tradition descending from Moses and the perverted Jewish Cabala of the Rabbis, and that he was perfectly aware of the tendency even among the best of Jews to turn the former to the advantage of the Messianic dreams.

Mrs. Pott, who in her *Francis Bacon and his Secret Society* sets out to prove that Bacon was the founder of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, ignores all the previous history of the secret tradition. Bacon was not the originator but the inheritor of the ideas on which both these societies were founded. And the further contention that Bacon was at the same time the author of the greatest dramas in

the English language and of *The Chymical Marriage of Christian Rosengreutz* is manifestly absurd. Nevertheless, Bacon's influence amongst the Rosicrucians is apparent; Heydon's *Voyage to the Land of the Rosicrucians* is in fact a mere plagiarism of Bacon's *New Atlantis*.

Mrs. Pott seems to imagine that by proclaiming Bacon to have been the founder or even a member of the Order of Freemasonry she is revealing a great masonic secret which Freemasons have conspired to keep dark. But why should the Craft desire to disown so illustrious a progenitor or seek to conceal his connexion with the Order if any such existed? Findel, indeed, frankly admits that the *New Atlantis* contained unmistakable allusions to Freemasonry and that Bacon contributed to its final transformation.³²⁵ This was doubtless brought about largely by the English Rosicrucians who followed after. To suggest then that Freemasonry originated with the Rosicrucians is to ignore the previous history of the secret tradition. Rosicrucianism was not the beginning but a link in the long chain connecting Freemasonry with far earlier secret associations. The resemblance between the two Orders admits of no denial. Thus Yarker writes: "The symbolic tracing of the Rosicrucians was a Square Temple approached by seven steps ... here also we find the two pillars of Hermes, the five-pointed star, sun and moon, compasses, square and triangle." Yarker further observes that "even Wren was more or less a student of Hermeticism, and if we had a full list of Freemasons and Rosicrucians we should probably be surprised at the numbers who belonged to both systems."³²⁶

Professor Böhle emphatically states that "Freemasonry is neither more nor less than Rosicrucianism as modified by those who transplanted it into England." Chambers, who published his famous *Cyclopædia* in 1728, observes: "Some who are no friends to Freemasonry, make the present flourishing society of Freemasons a branch of *Rosicrucians*, or rather the Rosicrucians themselves under a new name or relation, viz. as retainers to building. And it is certain there are some Freemasons who have all the characters of Rosicrucians."

The connexion between Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism is, however, a question hardly less controversial than that of the connexion between Freemasonry and Templarism.

Dr. Mackey violently disputes the theory. "The Rosicrucians," he writes, "as this brief history indicates, had no connexion whatever with the masonic fraternity. Notwithstanding this fact, Barruel, the most malignant of our revilers, with a characteristic spirit of misrepresentation, attempted to identify the two institutions."³²⁷ But the aforesaid "brief history" indicates nothing of the kind, and the reference to Barruel as a malignant reviler for suggesting a connexion, which, as we have seen, many Freemasons admit, shows on which side this "spirit of misrepresentation" exists. It is interesting, however, to note that in the eyes of

certain masonic writers connexion with the Rosicrucians is regarded as highly discreditable; the fraternity would thus appear to have been less blameless than we have been taught to believe. Mr. Waite is equally concerned with proving that there "is no traceable connexion between Masonry and Rosicrucianism," and he goes on to explain that Freemasonry was never a learned society, that it never laid claim to "any transcendental secrets of alchemy and magic, or to any skill in medicine," etc.³²⁸

The truth may lie between the opposing contentions of Prof. Böhle and his two masonic antagonists. The Freemasons were clearly, for the reasons given by Mr. Waite, not a mere continuation of the Rosicrucians, but more likely borrowed from the Rosicrucians a part of their system and symbols which they adapted to their own purpose. Moreover, the incontrovertible fact is that in the list of English Freemasons and Rosicrucians we find men who belonged to both Orders and amongst these two who contributed largely to the constitutions of English Freemasonry.

The first of these is Robert Fludd, whom Mr. Waite describes as "the central figure of Rosicrucian literature, ... an intellectual giant, ... a man of immense erudition, of exalted mind, and, to judge by his writings, of extreme personal sanctity. Ennemoser describes him as one of the most distinguished disciples of Paracelsus...."³²⁹ Yarker adds this clue: "In 1630 we find Fludd, the chief of the Rosicrucians, using architectural language, and there is proof that his Society was divided into degrees, and from the fact that the Masons' Company of London had a copy of the Masonic Charges 'presented by Mr. Fludd' we may suppose that he was a Freemason before 1620."³³⁰

A still more important link is Elias Ashmole, the antiquary, astrologer, and alchemist, founder of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, who was born in 1617. An avowed Rosicrucian, and as we have seen, also a Freemason, Ashmole displayed great energy in reconstituting the Craft; he is said to have perfected its organization, to have added to it further mystic symbols, and according to Ragon, it was he who drew up the ritual of the existing three Craft degrees—Entered Apprentice, Fellow-Craft, and Master Mason—which was adopted by Grand Lodge in 1717. Whence did these fresh inspirations come but from the Rosicrucians? For, as Ragon also informs us, in the year that Ashmole was received into Freemasonry the Rosicrucians held their meeting in the same room at Mason Hall!³³¹

How, then, can it be said that there was "no traceable connexion between Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism?" and why should it be the part of a "malignant reviler" to connect them? It is not suggested that Rosicrucians, such as Fludd or Ashmole, imported any magical elements into Freemasonry, but simply the system and symbols of the Rose-Croix with a certain degree of esoteric learning. That

Rosicrucianism forms an important link in the chain of the secret tradition is therefore undeniable.

THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY RABBIS

There is, however, a third channel through which the Judaic legends of Freemasonry may have penetrated to the Craft, namely, the Rabbis of the seventeenth century. The Jewish writer Bernard Lazare has declared that "there were Jews around the cradle of Freemasonry,"³³² and if this statement is applied to the period preceding the institution of Grand Lodge in 1717 it certainly finds confirmation in fact. Thus it is said that in the preceding century the coat-of-arms now used by Grand Lodge had been designed by an Amsterdam Jew, Jacob Jehuda Leon Templo, colleague of Cromwell's friend the Cabalist, Manasseh ben Israel.³³³ To quote Jewish authority on this question, Mr. Lucien Wolf writes that Templo "had a monomania for ... everything relating to the Temple of Solomon and the Tabernacle of the Wilderness. He constructed gigantic models of both these edifices."³³⁴ These he exhibited in London, which he visited in 1675 and earlier, and it seems not unreasonable to conclude that this may have provided a fresh source of inspiration to the Freemasons who framed the masonic ritual some forty years later. At any rate, the masonic coat-of-arms still used by Grand Lodge of England is undoubtedly of Jewish design.

"This coat," says Mr. Lucien Wolf, "is entirely composed of Jewish symbols," and is "an attempt to display heraldically the various forms of the Cherubim pictured to us in the second vision of Ezekiel—an Ox, a Man, a Lion, and an Eagle—and thus belongs to the highest and most mystical domain of Hebrew symbolism."³³⁵

In other words, this vision, known to the Jews as the "Mercaba,"³³⁶ belongs to the Cabala, where a particular interpretation is placed on each figure so as to provide an esoteric meaning not perceptible to the uninitiated.³³⁷ The masonic coat-of-arms is thus entirely Cabalistic; as is also the seal on the diplomas of Craft Masonry, where another Cabalistic figure, that of a man and woman combined, is reproduced.³³⁸

Of the Jewish influence in Masonry after 1717 I shall speak later.

To sum up, then, the origins of the system we now know as Freemasonry are not to be found in one source alone. The twelve alternative sources enumerated in the *Masonic Cyclopædia* and quoted at the beginning of this chapter may all have contributed to its formation. Thus Operative Masonry may have descended from the Roman Collegia and through the operative masons of the Middle Ages, whilst Speculative Masonry may have derived from the patriarchs and the mysteries of the pagans. But the source of inspiration which admits of no denial is the Jewish

Cabala. Whether this penetrated to our country through the Roman Collegia, the *compagnonnages*, the Templars, the Rosicrucians, or through the Jews of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose activities behind the scenes of Freemasonry we shall see later, is a matter of speculation. The fact remains that when the ritual and constitutions of Masonry were drawn up in 1717, although certain fragments of the ancient Egyptian and Pythagorean doctrines were retained, the Judaic version of the secret tradition was the one selected by the founders of Grand Lodge on which to build up their system.

6. THE GRAND LODGE ERA

Whatever were the origins of the Order we now know as Freemasonry, it is clear that during the century preceding its reorganization under Grand Lodge of London the secret system of binding men together for a common purpose, based on Eastern esoteric doctrines, had been anticipated by the Rosicrucians. Was this secret system employed, however by any other body of men? It is certainly easy to imagine how in this momentous seventeenth century, when men of all opinions were coalescing against opposing forces—Lutherans combining against the Papacy, Catholics rallying their forces against invading Protestantism, Republicans plotting in favour of Cromwell, Royalists in their turn plotting to restore the Stuarts, finally Royalists plotting against each other on behalf of rival dynasties—an organization of this kind, enabling one to work secretly for a cause and to set invisibly vast numbers of human beings in motion, might prove invaluable to any party.

Thus, according to certain masonic writers on the Continent, the system used by the Rosicrucians in their fight against "Popery" was also employed by the Jesuits for a directly opposite purpose. In the manuscripts of the Prince of Hesse published by Lecouteulx de Canteleu it is declared that in 1714 the Jesuits used the mysteries of the Rose-Croix. Mirabeau also relates that "the Jesuits profited by the internal troubles of the reign of Charles I to possess themselves of the symbols, the allegories, and the carpets (tapis) of the Rose-Croix masons, who were only the ancient order of the Templars secretly perpetuated. It may be seen by means of what imperceptible innovations they succeeded in substituting their catechism to the instruction of the Templars."³³⁹

Other Continental writers again assert that Cromwell, the arch-opponent of the Catholic Church, was "a higher initiate of masonic mysteries," and used the system for his own elevation to power³⁴⁰; further, that he found himself outdistanced by the Levellers; that this sect, whose name certainly suggests masonic inspiration,

adopted for its symbols the square and compass,³⁴¹ and in its claim of real equality threatened the supremacy of the usurper. Finally, Elias Ashmole, the Rosicrucian Royalist, is said to have turned the masonic system against Cromwell, so that towards the end of the seventeenth century the Order rallied to the Stuart cause.³⁴²

But all this is pure speculation resting on no basis of known facts. The accusation that the Jesuits used the system of the Rose-Croix as a cover to political intrigues is referred to by the Rosicrucian Eliphas Lévi as the outcome of ignorance, which "refutes itself." It is significant to notice that it emanates mainly from Germany and from the Illuminati; the Prince of Hesse was a member of the *Stricte Observance* and Mirabeau an Illuminatus at the time he wrote the passage quoted above. That in the seventeenth century certain Jesuits played the part of political intriguers I suppose their warmest friends will hardly deny, but that they employed any secret or masonic system seems to me perfectly incapable of proof. I shall return to this point later, however, in connexion with the Illuminati.

As to Cromwell, the only circumstance that lends any colour to the possibility of his connexion with Freemasonry is his known friendship for Manasseh ben Israel, the colleague of the Rabbi Templo who designed the coat-of-arms later adopted by Grand Lodge. If, therefore, the Jews of Amsterdam were a source of inspiration to the Freemasons of the seventeenth century, it is not impossible that Cromwell may have been the channel through which this influence first penetrated.

In the matter of the Stuarts we are, however, on firm ground with regard to Freemasonry. That the lodges at the end of the seventeenth century were Royalist is certain, and there seems good reason to believe that, when the revolution of 1688 divided the Royalist cause, the Jacobites who fled to France with James II took Freemasonry with them.³⁴³ With the help of the French they established lodges in which, it is said, masonic rites and symbols were used to promote the cause of the Stuarts. Thus the land of promise signified Great Britain, Jerusalem stood for London, and the murder of Hiram represented the execution of Charles I.³⁴⁴

Meanwhile Freemasonry in England did not continue to adhere to the Stuart cause as it had done under the ægis of Elias Ashmole, and by 1717 is said to have become Hanoverian.

From this important date the official history of the present system may be said to begin; hitherto everything rests on stray documents, of which the authenticity is frequently doubtful, and which provide no continuous history of the Order. In 1717 for the first time Freemasonry was established on a settled basis and in the process underwent a fundamental change. So far it would seem to have retained an operative element, but in the transformation that now took place this was entirely

eliminated, and the whole Order was transformed into a middle-and upper-class speculative body. This *coup d'état*, already suggested in 1703, took place in 1716, when four London lodges of Freemasons met together at the Apple Tree Tavern in Charles Street, Covent Garden, "and having put into the chair the oldest Master Mason (now the Master of a lodge), they constituted themselves a Grand Lodge, *pro tempore*, in due form." On St. John the Baptist's Day, June 24 of the next year, the annual assembly and banquet were held at the Goose and Gridiron in St. Paul's Churchyard, when Mr. Antony Sayer was elected Grand Master and invested with all the badges of office.³⁴⁵

It is evident from the above account that already in 1717 the speculative elements must have predominated in the lodges, otherwise we might expect to find the operative masons taking some part in these proceedings and expressing their opinion as to whether their association should pass under the control of men entirely unconnected with the Craft. But no, the leaders of the new movement all appear to have belonged to the middle class, nor from this moment do either masons or architects seem to have played any prominent part in Freemasonry.

But the point that official history does not attempt to elucidate is the reason for this decision. Why should the Freemasons of London—whether they were at this date a speculative or only a semi-speculative association—have suddenly recognized the necessity of establishing a Grand Lodge and drawing up a ritual and "Constitution"? It is evident, then, that some circumstances must have arisen which led them to take this important step. I would suggest that the following may be the solution to the problem.

Freemasonry, as we have seen, was a system that could be employed in any cause and had now come to be used by intriguers of every kind—and not only by intriguers, but by merely convivial bodies, "jolly Brotherhoods of the Bottle," who modelled themselves on masonic associations.³⁴⁶ But the honest citizens of London who met and feasted at the Goose and Gridiron were clearly not intriguers, they were neither Royalist nor Republican plotters, neither Catholic nor Lutheran fanatics, neither alchemists nor magicians, nor can it be supposed that they were simply revellers. If they were political, they were certainly not supporters of the Stuarts; on the contrary, they were generally reported to have been Hanoverian in their sympathies, indeed Dr. Bussell goes so far as to say that Grand Lodge was instituted to support the Hanoverian dynasty.³⁴⁷ It would be perhaps nearer the truth to conclude that if they were Hanoverian it was because they were constitutional, and the Hanoverian dynasty having now been established they wished to avoid further changes. In a word, then, they were simply men of peace, anxious to put an end to dissensions, who, seeing the system of Masonry utilized for the purpose of promoting discord, determined to wrest it from the hands of political intriguers and restore it to its original character of brotherhood, though

not of brotherhood between working masons only, but between men drawn from all classes and professions. By founding a Grand Lodge in London and drawing up a ritual and "Constitutions," they hoped to prevent the perversion of their signs and symbols and to establish the Order on a settled basis.

According to Nicolai this pacific purpose had already animated English Freemasons under the Grand Mastership of Sir Christopher Wren: "Its principal object from this period was to moderate the religious hatreds so terrible in England during the reign of James II and to try and establish some kind of concord or fraternity, by weakening as far as possible the antagonisms arising from the differences of religions, ranks, and interests." An eighteenth-century manuscript of the Prince of Hesse quoted by Lecouteulx de Canteleu expresses the view that in 1717 *"the mysteries of Freemasonry were reformed and purified in England of all political tendencies."*

In the matter of religion, Craft Masonry adopted an equally non-sectarian attitude. The first "Constitutions" of the Order, drawn up by Dr. Anderson in 1723, contain the following paragraph:

CONCERNING GOD AND RELIGION

A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charged in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet, 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the Centre of Union and the Means of Conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remained at a perpetual Distance.

The phrase "that Religion in which all men agree" has been censured by Catholic writers as advocating a universal religion in the place of Christianity. But this by no means follows. The idea is surely that Masons should be men adhering to that law of right and wrong common to all religious faiths. Craft Masonry may thus be described as Deist in character, but not in the accepted sense of the word which implies the rejection of Christian doctrines. If Freemasonry had been Deist in this sense might we not expect to find some connexion between the founders of Grand Lodge and the school of Deists—Toland, Bolingbroke, Woolston, Hume, and others—which flourished precisely at this period? Might not some analogy be detected between the organization of the Order and the Sodalities described in Toland's *Pantheisticon*, published in 1720? But of this I can find no trace whatever. The

principal founders of Grand Lodge were, as we have seen, clergymen, both engaged in preaching Christian doctrines at their respective churches.³⁴⁸ It is surely therefore reasonable to conclude that Freemasonry at the time of its reorganization in 1717 was Deistic only in so far that it invited men to meet together on the common ground of a belief in God. Moreover, some of the early English rituals contain distinctly Christian elements. Thus both in *Jachin and Boaz* (1762) and *Hiram or the Grand Master Key to the Door of both Antient and Modern Freemasonry by a Member of the Royal Arch* (1766) we find prayers in the lodges concluding with the name of Christ. These passages were replaced much later by purely Deistic formulas under the Grand Mastership of the free-thinking Duke of Sussex in 1813.

But in spite of its innocuous character, Freemasonry, merely by reason of its secrecy, soon began to excite alarm in the public mind. As early as 1724 a work entitled *The Grand Mystery of the Freemasons Discovered* had provoked an angry remonstrance from the Craft³⁴⁹; and when the French edict against the Order was passed, a letter signed "Jachin" appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* declaring the "Freemasons who have lately been suppressed not only in France but in Holland" to be "a dangerous Race of Men":

No Government ought to suffer such clandestine Assemblies where Plots against the State may be carried on, under the Pretence of Brotherly Love and good Fellowship.

The writer, evidently unaware of possible Templar traditions, goes on to observe that the sentinel placed at the door of the lodge with a drawn sword in his hand "is not the only mark of their being a military Order"; and suggests that the title of Grand Master is taken in imitation of the Knights of Malta. "Jachin," moreover, scents a Popish plot:

They not only admit Turks, Jews, Infidels, but even Jacobites, non-jurors and Papists themselves ... how can we be sure that those Persons who are known to be well affected, are let into all their Mysteries? They make no scruple to acknowledge that there is a Distinction between Prentices and Master Masons and who knows whether they may not have an higher Order of Cabalists, who keep the Grand Secret of all entirely to themselves?³⁵⁰

Later on in France, the Abbé Pérau published his satires on Freemasonry, *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons* (1742), *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons trahi et le Secret des Mopses révélé*, (1745), and *Les Francs-Maçons écrasés* (1746)³⁵¹ and in about 1761 another English writer said to be a Mason brought down a torrent of invective on his head by the publication of the ritual of the Craft Degrees under the name of

*Jachin and Boaz.*³⁵²

It must be admitted that from all this controversy no party emerges in a very charitable light, Catholics and Protestants alike indulging in sarcasms and reckless accusations against Freemasonry, the Freemasons retorting with far from brotherly forbearance.³⁵³ But, again, one must remember that all these men were of their age—an age which seen through the eyes of Hogarth would certainly not appear to have been distinguished for delicacy. It should be noted, however, when one reads in masonic works of the "persecutions" to which Freemasonry has been subjected, that aggression was not confined only to the one side in the conflict; moreover, that the Freemasons at this period were divided amongst themselves and expressed with regard to opposing groups much the same suspicions that non-Masons expressed with regard to the Order as a whole. For the years following after the suppression of Masonry in France were marked by the most important development in the history of the modern Order—the inauguration of the Additional Degrees.

THE ADDITIONAL DEGREES

The origin and inspiration of the additional degrees has provoked hardly less controversy in masonic circles than the origin of Masonry itself. It should be explained that Craft Masonry, or Blue Masonry—that is to say, the first three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason of which I have attempted to trace the history—were the only degrees recognized by Grand Lodge at the time of its foundation in 1717 and still form the basis of all forms of modern Masonry. On this foundation were erected, somewhere between 1740 and 1743, the degree of the Royal Arch and the first of the series of upper degrees now known as the Scottish Rite or as the Ancient and Accepted Rite. The acceptance or rejection of this superstructure has always formed a subject of violent controversy between Masons, one body affirming that Craft Masonry is the only true and genuine Masonry, the other declaring that the real object of Masonry is only to be found in the higher degrees. It was this controversy, centring round the Royal Arch degree, that about the middle of the eighteenth century split Masonry into opposing camps of Ancients and Moderns, the Ancients declaring that the R.A. was "the Root, Heart, and Marrow of Freemasonry,"³⁵⁴ the Moderns rejecting it. Although worked by the Ancients from 1756 onwards, this degree was definitely repudiated by Grand Lodge in 1792,³⁵⁵ and only in 1813 was officially received into English Freemasonry.

The R.A. degree, which is said nevertheless to be contained in embryo in the 1723 Book of Constitutions,³⁵⁶ is purely Judaic—a glorification of Israel and commemorating the building of the second Temple. That it was derived from the Jewish Cabala seems probable, and Yarker, commenting on the phrase in the *Gentleman's Magazine* quoted above—"Who knows whether they (the

Freemasons) have not a higher order of Cabalists, who keep the Grand Secret of all entirely to themselves"—observes: "It looks very like an intimation of the Royal Arch degree,"³⁵⁷ and elsewhere he states that "the Royal Arch degree, when it had the Three Veils, must have been the work, even if by instruction, of a Cabalistic Jew about 1740, and from this time we may expect to find a secret tradition grafted upon Anderson's system."³⁵⁸

Precisely in this same year of 1740 Mr. Waite says that "an itinerant pedlar of the Royal Arch degree is said to have propagated it in Ireland, claiming that it was practised at York and London,"³⁵⁹ and in 1744 a certain Dr. Dassigny wrote that the minds of the Dublin brethren had been lately disturbed about Royal Arch Masonry owing to the activities in Dublin of "a number of traders or hucksters in pretended Masonry," whom the writer connects with "Italians" or the "Italic Order."

A Freemason quoting this passage in a recent discussion on the upper degrees expresses the opinion that these hucksters were "Jacobite emissaries disguised under the form of a pretended Masonry," and that "by Italians and Italian Order he intends a reference to the Court of King James III, i.e. the Old Pretender at Rome, and to the Ecossais (Italic) Order of Masonry."³⁶⁰ It is much more likely that he had referred to another source of masonic instruction in Italy which I shall indicate in a later chapter.

But precisely at the moment when it is suggested that the Jacobites were intriguing to introduce the Royal Arch degree into Masonry they are also said to have been engaged in elaborating the "Scottish Rite." Let us examine this contention.

FREEMASONRY IN FRANCE

The foundation of Grand Lodge in London had been followed by the inauguration of Masonic Lodges on the Continent—in 1721 at Mons, in 1725 in Paris, in 1728 at Madrid, in 1731 at The Hague, in 1733 at Hamburg, etc. Several of these received their warrant from the Grand Lodge of England. But this was not the case with the Grand Lodge of Paris, which did not receive a warrant till 1743.

The men who founded this lodge, far from being non-political, were Jacobite leaders engaged in active schemes for the restoration of the Stuart dynasty. The leader of the group, Charles Radcliffe, had been imprisoned with his brother, the ill-fated Lord Derwentwater who was executed on Tower Hill in 1716. Charles had succeeded in escaping from Newgate and made his way to France, where he assumed the title of Lord Derwentwater, although the Earldom had ceased to exist under the bill of attainder against his brother.³⁶¹ It was this Lord Derwentwater—afterwards executed for taking part in the 1745 rebellion—who with several other Jacobites is said to have founded the Grand Lodge of Paris in 1725, and himself to

have become Grand Master.

The Jacobite character of the Paris lodge is not a matter of dispute. Mr. Gould relates that "the colleagues of Lord Derwentwater are stated to have been a Chevalier Maskeline, a Squire Heguerty, and others, all partisans of the Stuarts."³⁶² But he goes on to contest the theory that they used Freemasonry in the Stuart cause, which he regards as amounting to a charge of bad faith. This is surely unreasonable. The founders of Grand Lodge in Paris did not derive from Grand Lodge in London, from which they held no warrant,³⁶³ but, as we have seen, took their Freemasonry with them to France before Grand Lodge of London was instituted; they were therefore in no way bound by its regulations. And until the Constitutions of Anderson were published in 1723 no rule had been laid down that the Lodges should be non-political. In the old days Freemasonry had always been Royalist, as we see from the ancient charges that members should be "true liegemen of the King"; and if the adherents of James Edward saw in him their rightful sovereign, they may have conceived that they were using Freemasonry for a lawful purpose in adapting it to his cause. So although we may applaud the decision of the London Freemasons to purge Freemasonry of political tendencies and transform it into a harmonious system of brotherhood, we cannot accuse the Jacobites in France of bad faith in not conforming to a decision in which they had taken no part and in establishing lodges on their own lines.

Unfortunately, however, as too frequently happens when men form secret confederacies for a wholly honourable purpose, their ranks were penetrated by confederates of another kind. It has been said in an earlier chapter that, according to the documents produced by the *Ordre du Temple* in the early part of the nineteenth century, the Templars had never ceased to exist in spite of their official suppression in 1312, and that a line of Grand Masters had succeeded each other in unbroken succession from Jacques du Molay to the Duc de Cossé-Brissac, who was killed in 1792. The Grand Master appointed in 1705 is stated to have been Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, later the Regent. Mr. Waite has expressed the opinion that all this was an invention of the late eighteenth century, and that the Charter of Larmenius was fabricated at this date though not published until 1811 by the revived *Ordre du Temple* under the Grand Master, Fabré Palaprat. But evidence points to a contrary conclusion. M. Matter, who, as we have seen, disbelieves the story of the *Ordre du Temple* and the authenticity of the Charter of Larmenius in so far as it professes to be a genuine fourteenth-century document, nevertheless asserts that the *savants* who have examined it declare it to date from the early part of the eighteenth century, at which period Matter believes the Gospel of St. John used by the Order to have been arranged so as "to accompany the ceremonies of some masonic or secret society." Now, it was about 1740 that a revival of Templarism took place in France and Germany; we cannot therefore doubt that if Matter is right in this hypothesis, the secret society in question was that of the Templars, whether they

existed as lineal descendants of the twelfth-century Order or merely as a revival of that Order. The existence of the German Templars at this date under the name of the *Stricte Observance* (which we shall deal with in a further chapter) is indeed a fact disputed by no one; but that there was also an *Ordre du Temple* in France at the very beginning of the eighteenth century must be regarded as highly probable. Dr. Mackey, John Yarker, and Lecouteulx de Canteleu (who, owing to his possession of Templar documents, had exclusive sources of information) all declare this to have been the case and accept the Charter of Larmenius as authentic. "It is quite certain," says Yarker, "that there was at this period in France an *Ordre du Temple*, with a charter from John Mark Larmenius, who claimed appointment from Jacques du Molay. Philippe of Orléans accepted the Grand Mastership in 1705 and signed the Statutes."³⁶⁴

Without, however, necessarily accepting the Charter of Larmenius as authentic let us examine the probability of this assertion with regard to the Duc d'Orléans.

Amongst the Jacobites supporting Lord Derwentwater at the Grand Lodge of Paris was a certain Andrew Michael Ramsay, known as Chevalier Ramsay, who was born at Ayr near the famous Lodge of Kilwinning, where the Templars are said to have formed their alliance with the masons in 1314. In 1710 Ramsay was converted to the Roman Catholic faith by Fénelon and in 1724 became tutor to the sons of the Pretender at Rome. Mr. Gould has related that during his stay in France, Ramsay had formed a friendship with the Regent, Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, who was Grand Master of the *Ordre de Saint-Lazare*, instituted during the Crusades as a body of Hospitallers devoting themselves to the care of the lepers and which in 1608 had been joined to the *Ordre du Mont-Carmel*. It seems probable from all accounts that Ramsay was a Chevalier of this Order, but he cannot have been admitted into it by the Duc d'Orléans, for the Grand Master of the *Ordre de Saint-Lazare* was not the Duc d'Orléans but the Marquis de Dangeau, who, on his death in 1720, was succeeded by the son of the Regent, the Duc de Chartres.³⁶⁵ If, then, Ramsay was admitted to any Order by the Regent, it was surely the *Ordre du Temple*, of which the Regent is said to have been the Grand Master at this date.

Now, the infamous character of the Duc d'Orléans is a matter of common knowledge; moreover, during the Regency—that period of impiety and moral dissolution hitherto unparalleled in the history of France—the chief of council was the Duc de Bourbon, who later placed his mistress the Marquise de Prie and the financier Paris Duverney at the head of affairs, thus creating a scandal of such magnitude that he was exiled in 1726 through the influence of Cardinal Fleury. This Duc de Bourbon in 1737 is said to have become Grand Master of the Temple. "It was thus," observes de Canteleu, "that these two Grand Masters of the Temple degraded the royal authority and ceaselessly increased hatred against the

government."

It would therefore seem strange that a man so upright as Ramsay appears to have been, who had moreover but recently been converted to the Catholic Church, should have formed a friendship with the dissolute Regent of France, unless there had been some bond between them. But here we have a possible explanation—Templarism. Doubtless during Ramsay's youth at Kilwinning many Templar traditions had come to his knowledge, and if in France he found himself befriended by the Grand Master himself, what wonder that he should have entered into an alliance which resulted in his admission to an Order he had been accustomed to revere and which, moreover, was represented to him as the *fons et origo* of the masonic brotherhood to which he also belonged? It is thus that we find Ramsay in the very year that the Duc de Bourbon is said to have been made Grand Master of the Temple artlessly writing to Cardinal Fleury asking him to extend his protection to the society of Freemasons in Paris and enclosing a copy of the speech which he was to deliver on the following day, March 21, 1737. It is in this famous oration that for the first time we find Freemasonry traced to the Crusades:

At the time of the Crusades in Palestine many princes, lords, and citizens associated themselves, and vowed to restore the Temple of the Christians in the Holy Land, and to employ themselves in bringing back their architecture to its first institution. They agreed upon several ancient signs and symbolic words drawn from the well of religion in order to recognize themselves amongst the heathens and Saracens. These signs and words were only communicated to those who promised solemnly, and even sometimes at the foot of the altar, never to reveal them. This sacred promise was therefore not an execrable oath, as it has been called, but a respectable bond to unite Christians of all nationalities into one confraternity. Some time afterwards our Order formed an intimate union with the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. From that time our Lodges took the name of Lodges of St. John.³⁶⁶

This speech of Ramsay's has raised a storm of controversy amongst Freemasons because it contains a very decided hint of a connexion between Templarism and Freemasonry. Mr. Tuckett, in the paper referred to above, points out that only the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem are here mentioned,³⁶⁷ but Ramsay distinctly speaks of "our Order" forming a union with the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and we know that the Templars did eventually form such a union. The fact that Ramsay does not mention the Templars by name admits of a very plausible explanation. It must be remembered that, as Mr. Gould has shown, a copy of the oration was enclosed by Ramsay in his letter to Cardinal Fleury appealing for royal protection to be extended to Freemasonry; it is therefore hardly likely that he would have proclaimed a connexion between the Order he was anxious to present in the most favourable light and one which had formerly been suppressed by King

and Pope. Moreover, if the Charter of Larmenius is to be believed, the newly elected Grand Master of the Temple was the Duc de Bourbon, who had already incurred the Cardinal's displeasure. Obviously, therefore, Templar influence was kept in the background. This is not to imply bad faith on the part of Ramsay, who doubtless held the Order of Templars to be wholly praiseworthy; but he could not expect the King or Cardinal to share his view, and therefore held it more prudent to refer to the progenitors of Freemasonry under the vague description of a crusading body. Ramsay's well-meant effort met, however, with no success. Whether on account of this unlucky reference by which the Cardinal may have detected Templar influence or for some other reason, the appeal for royal protection was not only refused, but the new Order, which hitherto Catholics had been allowed to enter, was now prohibited by Royal edict. In the following year, 1738, the Pope, Clement XII, issued a bull, *In Eminenti*, banning Freemasonry and excommunicating Catholics who took part in it.

But this prohibition appears to have been without effect, for Freemasonry not only prospered but soon began to manufacture new degrees. And in the masonic literature of the following thirty years the Templar tradition becomes still more clearly apparent. Thus the Chevalier de Bérage in a well-known pamphlet, of which the first edition is said to have appeared in 1747,³⁶⁸ gives the following account of the origins of Freemasonry:

This Order was instituted by Godefroi de Bouillon in Palestine in 1330,³⁶⁹ after the decadence of the Christian armies, and was only communicated to the French Masons some time after and to a very small number, as a reward for the obliging services they rendered to several of our English and Scottish Knights, from whom true Masonry is taken. Their Metropolitan Lodge is situated on the Mountain of Heredom where the first Lodge was held in Europe and which exists in all its splendour. The General Council is still held there and it is the seal of the Sovereign Grand Master in office. This mountain is situated between the West and North of Scotland at sixty miles from Edinburgh.

Apart from the historical confusion of the first sentence, this passage is of interest as evidence that the theory of a connexion between certain crusading Knights and the Lodge of Heredom of Kilwinning was current as early as 1747. The Baron Tschoudy in his *Étoile Flamboyante*, which appeared in 1766, says that the crusading origin of Freemasonry is the one officially taught in the lodges, where candidates for initiation are told that several Knights who had set forth to rescue the holy places of Palestine from the Saracens "formed an association under the name of Free Masons, thus indicating that their principal desire was the reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon," that, further, they adopted certain signs, grips, and passwords as a defence against the Saracens, and finally that "our Society ... fraternized on the footing of an Order with the Knights of St. John of

Jerusalem, from which it is apparent that the Freemasons borrowed the custom of regarding St. John as the patron of the whole Order in general."³⁷⁰ After the crusades "the Masons kept their rites and methods and in this way perpetuated the royal art by establishing lodges, first in England, then in Scotland," etc.³⁷¹

In this account, therefore, Freemasonry is represented as having been instituted for the defence of Christian doctrines. De Bérage expresses the same view and explains that the object of these Crusaders in thus binding themselves together was to protect their lives against the Saracens by enveloping their sacred doctrines in a veil of mystery. For this purpose they made use of Jewish symbolism, which they invested with a Christian meaning. Thus the Temple of Solomon was used to denote the Church of Christ, the bough of acacia signified the Cross, the square and the compass the union between the Old and New Testaments, etc. So "the mysteries of Masonry were in their principle, and are still, nothing else than those of the Christian religion."³⁷²

Baron Tschoudy, however, declares that all this stops short of the truth, that Freemasonry originated long before the Crusades in Palestine, and that the real "ancestors, fathers, authors of the Masons, those illustrious men of whom I will not say the date nor betray the secret," were a "disciplined body" whom Tschoudy describes by the name of "the Knights of the Aurora and Palestine." After "the almost total destruction of the Jewish people" these "Knights" had always hoped to regain possession of the domains of their fathers and to rebuild the Temple, and they carefully preserved their "regulations and particular liturgy," together with a "sublime treatise" which was the object of their continual study and of their philosophical speculations. Tschoudy further relates that they were students of the "occult sciences," of which alchemy formed a part, and that they had "abjured the principles of the Jewish religion in order to follow the lights of the Christian faith." At the time of the Crusades the Knights of Palestine came out from the desert of the Thebaïd, where they had remained hidden, and joined to themselves some of the crusaders who had remained in Jerusalem. Declaring that they were the descendants of the masons who had worked on the Temple of Solomon, they professed to concern themselves with "speculative architecture," which served to disguise a more glorious point of view. From this time they took the name of Free Masons, presented themselves under this title to the crusading armies and assembled under their banners.³⁷³

It would of course be absurd to regard any of the foregoing accounts as historical facts; the important point is that they tend to prove the fallacy of supposing that the Johannite-Templar theory originated with the revived *Ordre du Temple*, since one corresponding to it so closely was current in the middle of the preceding century. It is true that in these earlier accounts the actual words "Johannite" and "Templar" do not occur, but the resemblance between the sect of Jews professing

the Christian faith but possessing a "particular liturgy" and a "sublime treatise"—apparently some early form of the Cabala—dealing with occult science, and the Mandæans or Johannites with their Cabalistic "Book of Adam," their Book of John, and their ritual, is at once apparent. Further, the allusions to the connexion between the Knights who had been indoctrinated in the Holy Land and the Scottish lodges coincides exactly with the Templar tradition, published not only by the *Ordre du Temple* but handed down in the Royal Order of Scotland.

From all this the following facts stand out: (1) that whilst British Craft Masonry traced its origin to the operative guilds of masons, the Freemasons of France from 1737 onwards placed the origin of the Order in crusading chivalry; (2) that it was amongst these Freemasons that the upper degrees known as the Scottish Rite arose; and (3) that, as we shall now see, these degrees clearly suggest Templar inspiration.

The earliest form of the upper degrees appears to have been the one given by de Bérage, as follows:

1. Parfait Maçon Élu.
2. Élu de Perignan.
3. Élu des Quinze.
4. Petit Architecte.
5. Grand Architecte.
6. Chevalier de l'Épée et de Rose-Croix.
7. Noachite ou Chevalier Prussien.

The first of these to make its appearance is believed to have been the one here assigned to the sixth place. This degree known in modern Masonry as "Prince of the Rose-Croix of Heredom or Knight of the Pelican and Eagle" became the eighteenth and the most important degree in what was later called the Scottish Rite, or at the present time in England the Ancient and Accepted Rite.

Why was this Rite called Scottish? "It cannot be too strongly insisted on," says Mr. Gould, "that all Scottish Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Grand Lodge of Scotland, nor, with one possible exception—that of the Royal Order of Scotland—did it ever originate in that country."³⁷⁴ But in the case of the Rose-Croix degree there is surely some justification for the term in legend, if not in proven fact, for, as we have already seen, according to the tradition of the Royal Order of Scotland this degree had been contained in it since the fourteenth century, when the degrees of H.R.M. (Heredom) and R.S.Y.C.S. (Rosy Cross) are said to have been instituted by Robert Bruce in collaboration with the Templars after the battle of Bannockburn. Dr. Mackey is one of the few Masons who admit this probable affiliation, and in referring to the tradition of the Royal Order of Scotland

observes: "From that Order it seems to us by no means improbable that the present degree of Rose-Croix de Heredom may have taken its origin."³⁷⁵

But the Rose-Croix degree, like the Templar tradition from which it appears to have descended, is capable of a dual interpretation, or rather of a multiple interpretation, for no degree in Masonry has been subject to so many variations. That on the Continent it had descended through the Rosicrucians in an alchemical form seems more than probable. It would certainly be difficult to believe that a degree of R.S.Y.C.S. was imported from the East and incorporated in the Royal Order of Scotland in 1314; that by a mere coincidence a man named Christian Rosenkreutz was—according to the Rosicrucian legend—born in the same century and transmitted a secret doctrine he had discovered in the East to the seventeenth-century Brethren of the Rosy Cross; and finally, that a degree of the Rose-Croix was founded in circ. 1741 without any connexion existing between these succeeding movements. Even if we deny direct affiliation, we must surely admit a common source of inspiration producing, if not a continuation, at any rate a periodic revival of the same ideas. Dr. Oliver indeed admits affiliation between the seventeenth-century fraternity and the eighteenth-century degree, and after pointing out that the first indication of the Rose-Croix degree appears in the *Fama Fraternitatis* in 1613, goes on to say:

It was known much sooner, although not probably as a degree in Masonry, for it existed as a cabalistic science from the earliest times in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as amongst the Jews and Moors in times more recent, and in our own country the names of Roger Bacon, Fludd, Ashmole, and many others are found in its list of adepts.³⁷⁶

Dr. Mackey, quoting this passage, observes that "Oliver confounds the masonic Rose-Croix with the alchemical Rosicrucians," and proceeds to give an account of the Rose-Croix degree as worked in England and America, which he truly describes as "in the strictest sense a Christian degree."³⁷⁷ But the point Dr. Mackey overlooks is that this is only one version of the degree, which, as we shall see later, has been and still is worked in a very different manner on the Continent.

It is, however, certain that the version of the Rose-Croix degree first adopted by the Freemasons of France in about 1741 was not only so Christian but so Catholic in character as to have given rise to the belief that it was devised by the Jesuits in order to counteract the attacks of which Catholicism was the object.³⁷⁸ In a paper on the Additional Degrees Mr. J.S. Tuckett writes:

There is undeniable evidence that in their *earliest forms* the Ecossais or Scots Degrees were Roman Catholic; I have a MS. Ritual in French of what I believe to be the *original* Chev. de l'Aigle or S.:P.:D.:R.:C.: (Souverain Prince de Rose-Croix)

and in it the New Law is declared to be "la foy Catholique," and the Baron Tschoudy in his *L'Étoile Flamboyante* of 1766 describes the same Degree as "le Catholicisme mis en grade" (Vol. I. p. 114). I suggest that Ecossais or Scots Masonry was intended to be a Roman Catholic as well as a Stuart form of Freemasonry, in which none but those devoted to both Restorations were to be admitted.³⁷⁹

But is it necessary to read this political intention into the degree? If the tradition of the Royal Order of Scotland is to be believed, the idea of the Rose-Croix degree was far older than the Stuart cause, and dated back to Bannockburn, when the degree of Heredom with which it was coupled was instituted in order "to correct the errors and reform the abuses which had crept in among the three degrees of St. John's Masonry," and to provide a "Christianized form of the Third Degree," "purified of the dross of paganism and even of Judaism."³⁸⁰ Whether the antiquity attributed to these degrees can be proved or not, it certainly appears probable that the legend of the Royal Order of Scotland had some foundation in fact, and therefore that the ideas embodied in the eighteenth-century Rose-Croix degree may have been drawn from the store of that Order and brought by the Jacobites to France. At the same time there is no evidence in support of the statement made by certain Continental writers that Ramsay actually instituted this or any of the upper degrees. On the contrary, in his Oration he expressly states that Freemasonry is composed of the Craft degrees only:

We have amongst us three kinds of brothers: Novices or Apprentices, Fellows or Professed Brothers, Masters or Perfected Brethren. To the first are explained the moral virtues; to the second the heroic virtues; to the last the Christian virtues....

It might be said then that the Rose-Croix degree was here foreshadowed in the Masters' degree, in that the latter definitely inculcated Christianity. This would be perfectly in accord with Ramsay's point of view as set forth in his account of his conversion by Fénelon. When he first met the Archbishop of Cambrai in 1710, Ramsay relates that he had lost faith in all Christian sects and had resolved to "take refuge in a wise Deism limited to respect for the Divinity and for the immutable ideas of pure virtue," but that his conversation with Fénelon led him to accept the Catholic faith. And he goes on to show that "Monsieur de Cambrai turned Atheists into Deists, Deists into Christians, and Christians into Catholics by a sequence of ideas full of enlightenment and feeling."³⁸¹

Might not this be the process which Ramsay aimed at introducing into Freemasonry—the process which in fact does form part of the masonic system in England to-day, where the Atheist must become, at least by profession, a Deist before he can be admitted to the Craft Degrees, whilst the Rose-Croix degree is reserved solely for those who profess the Christian faith? Such was undoubtedly

the idea of the men who introduced the Rose-Croix degree into France; and Ragon, who gives an account of this "Ancien Rose-Croix Francais"—which is almost identical with the degree now worked in England, but long since abandoned in France—objects to it on the very score of its Christian character.³⁸²

In this respect the Rose-Croix amongst all the upper degrees introduced to France in the middle of the eighteenth century stands alone, and it alone can with any probability be attributed to Scottish Jacobite inspiration. It was not, in fact, until three or four years after Lord Derwentwater or his mysterious successor Lord Harnouester³⁸³ had resigned the Grand Mastership in favour of the Duc d'Antin in 1738 that the additional degrees were first heard of, and it was not until eight years after the Stuart cause had received its death-blow at Culloden, that is to say, in 1754, that the Rite of Perfection in which the so-called Scots Degrees were incorporated was drawn up in the following form:

RITE OF PERFECTION

1. Entered Apprentice.
2. Fellow Craft.
3. Master Mason.
4. Secret Master.
5. Perfect Master.
6. Intimate Secretary.
7. Intendant of the Buildings.
8. Provost and Judge.
9. Elect of Nine.
10. Elect of Fifteen.
11. Chief of the Twelve Tribes.
12. Grand Master Architect.
13. Knight of the Ninth Arch.
14. Ancient Grand Elect.
15. Knight of the Sword.
16. Prince of Jerusalem.
17. Knight of the East and West.
18. Rose-Croix Knight.
19. Grand Pontiff.
20. Grand Patriarch.
21. Grand Master of the Key of Masonry.
22. Prince of Libanus or Knight of the Royal Axe.
23. Sovereign Prince Adept.
24. Commander of the Black and White Eagle.
25. Commander of the Royal Secret.³⁸⁴

We have only to glance at the nomenclature of the last twenty-two of these degrees to see that on the basis of mere operative Masonry there has been built up a system composed of two elements: crusading chivalry and Judaic tradition. What else is this but Templarism? Even Mr. Gould, usually so reticent on Templar influence, admits it at this period:

In France ... some of the Scots lodges would appear to have very early manufactured new degrees, connecting these very distinguished Scots Masons with the Knights Templar, and thus given rise to the subsequent flood of Templarism. The earliest of all are supposed to have been the Masons of Lyons who invented the Kadosch degree, representing the vengeance of the Templars, in 1741. From that time new rites multiplied in France and Germany, but all those of French origin contain Knightly, and almost all, Templar grades. In every case the connecting link was composed of one or more Scots degrees.³⁸⁵

The name Kadosch here mentioned is a Hebrew word signifying "holy" or "consecrated," which in the Cabala is found in conjunction with the Tetragrammaton.³⁸⁶ The degree is said to have developed from that of Grand Elect,³⁸⁷ one of the three "degrees of vengeance" celebrating with sanguinary realism the avenging of the murder of Hiram. But in its final form of Knight Kadosch—later to become the thirtieth degree of the "Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite"—the Hiram legend was changed into the history of the Templars with Jacques du Molay as the victim.³⁸⁸ So the reprobation of attack on authority personified by the master-builder becomes approbation of attack on authority in the person of the King of France.

The introduction of the upper degrees with their political and, later on, anti-Christian tendencies thus marked a complete departure from the fundamental principle of Freemasonry that "nothing concerning the religion or government shall ever be spoken of in the lodge." For this reason they have been assailed not only by anti-masonic writers but by Freemasons themselves.³⁸⁹ To represent Barruel and Robison as the enemies of Freemasonry is therefore absolutely false; neither of these men denounced Craft Masonry as practised in England, but only the superstructure erected on the Continent. Barruel indeed incurs the reproaches of Mounier for his championship of English Freemasons:

He vaunts their respect for religious opinion and for authority. When he speaks of Freemasons in general they are impious, rebellious successors of the Templars and Albigenses, but *all those of England are innocent*. More than this, all the Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts, and Master Masons in all parts of the world are innocent; there are only guilty ones in the higher degrees, which are not essential to the institution and are sought by a small number of people.³⁹⁰

In this opinion of Barruel's a great number of Masonic writers concur—Clavel, Ragon, Rebold, Thory, Findel, and others too numerous to mention; all indicate Craft Masonry as the only true kind and the upper degrees as constituting a danger to the Order. Rebold, who gives a list of these writers, quotes a masonic publication, authorized by the Grand Orient and the Supreme Council of France, in which it is said that "from all these rites there result the most foolish conceptions, ... the most absurd legends, ... the most extravagant systems, the most immoral principles, and those the most dangerous for the peace and preservation of States," and that therefore except the first three degrees of Masonry, which are really ancient and universal, everything is "chimera, extravagance, futility, and lies."³⁹¹ Did Barruel and Robison ever use stronger language than this?

To attribute the perversion of Masonry to Jacobite influence would be absurd. How could it be supposed that either Ramsay or Lord Derwentwater (who died as a devout Catholic on the scaffold in 1746) could have been concerned in an attempt to undermine the Catholic faith or the monarchy of France? I would suggest, then, that the term "Scots Masonry" became simply a veil for Templarism—Templarism, moreover, of a very different kind to that from which the original degree of the Rose-Croix was derived. It was this so-called Scots Masonry that, after the resignation of Lord Derwentwater, "boldly came forward and claimed to be not merely a part of Masonry but the real Masonry, possessed of superior knowledge and entitled to greater privileges and the right to rule over the ordinary, i.e. Craft Masonry."³⁹² The Grand Lodge of France seems, however, to have realized the danger of submitting to the domination of the Templar element, and on the death of the Duc d'Antin and his replacement by the Comte de Clermont in 1743, signified its adherence to English Craft Masonry by proclaiming itself *Grande Loge Anglaise* de France and reissued the "Constitutions" of Anderson, first published in 1723, with the injunction that the Scots Masters should be placed on the same level as the simple Apprentices and Fellow Crafts and allowed to wear no badges of distinction.³⁹³

Grand Lodge of England appears to have been reassured by this proclamation as to the character of French Freemasonry, for now, in 1743, it at last delivered a warrant to Grand Lodge of France. Yet in reality it was from this moment that French Freemasonry degenerated the most rapidly. The Order was soon invaded by intriguers. This was rendered all the easier by the apathy of the Comte de Clermont, appointed Grand Master in 1743, who seems to have taken little interest in the Order and employed a substitute in the person of a dancing master named Lacorne, a man of low character through whose influence the lodges fell into a state of anarchy. Freemasonry was thus divided into warring factions: Lacorne and the crowd of low-class supporters who had followed him into the lodges founded a Grand Lodge of their own (*Grande Loge Lacorne*), and in 1756 the original Freemasons again attempted to make Craft Masonry the national Masonry of

France by deleting the word "Anglaise" from the appellation of Grand Lodge, and renaming it "Grand Loge Nationale de France." But many lodges still continue to work the additional degrees.

The rivalry between the two groups became so violent that in 1767 the government intervened and closed down Grand Lodge.

The Templar group had, however, formed two separate associations, the "Knights of the East" (1756) and the "Council of the Emperors of the East and West" (1758). In 1761 a Jew named Stephen Morin was sent to America by the "Emperors" armed with a warrant from the Duc de Clermont and Grand Lodge of Paris and bearing the sonorous title of "Grand Elect Perfect and Sublime Master," with orders to establish a Lodge in that country. In 1766 he was accused in Grand Lodge of "propagating strange and monstrous doctrines" and his patent of Grand Inspector was withdrawn.³⁹⁴ Morin, however, had succeeded in establishing the Rite of Perfection. Sixteen Inspectors, nearly all Jews, were now appointed. These included Isaac Iong, Isaac de Costa, Moses Hayes, B. Spitsner, Moses Cohen, Abraham Jacobs, and Hyman Long.

Meanwhile in France the closing of Grand Lodge had not prevented meetings of Lacorne's group, which, on the death of the Duc de Clermont in 1772, instituted the "Grand Orient" with the Duc de Chartres—the future "Philippe Égalité"—as Grand Master. The Grand Orient then invited the Grande Loge to revoke the decree of expulsion and unite with it, and this offer being accepted, the revolutionary party inevitably carried all before it, and the Duc de Chartres was declared Grand Master of all the councils, chapters, and Scotch lodges of France.³⁹⁵ In 1782 the "Council of Emperors" and the "Knights of the East" combined to form the "Grand Chapitre Général de France," which in 1786 joined up with the Grand Orient. The victory of the revolutionary party was then complete.

It is necessary to enter into all these tedious details in order to understand the nature of the factions grouped together under the banner of Masonry at this period. The Martinist Papus attributes the revolutionary influences that now prevailed in the lodges to their invasion by the Templars, and goes on to explain that this was owing to a change that had taken place in the *Ordre du Temple*. Under the Grand Mastership of the Regent and his successor the Duc de Bourbon, the revolutionary elements amongst the Templars had had full play, but from 1741 onwards the Grand Masters of the Order were supporters of the monarchy. When the Revolution came, the Duc de Cossé-Brissac, who had been Grand Master since 1776, perished amongst the defenders of the throne. It was thus that by the middle of the century the Order of the Temple ceased to be a revolutionary force, and the discontented elements it had contained, no longer able to find in it a refuge, threw themselves into Freemasonry, and entering the higher degrees turned them to

their subversive purpose. According to Papus, Lacorne was a member of the Templar group, and the dissensions that took place were principally a fight between the ex-Templars and the genuine Freemasons which ended in the triumph of the former:

Victorious rebels thus founded the Grand Orient of France. So a contemporary Mason is able to write: "It is not excessive to say that the masonic revolution of 1773 was the prelude and the precursor of the Revolution of 1789." What must be well observed is the secret action of the Brothers of the Templar Rite. It is they who are the real fomentors of revolution, the others are only docile agents.³⁹⁶

But all this attributes the baneful influence of Templarism to the French Templars alone, and the existence of such a body rests on no absolutely certain evidence. What is certain and admits of no denial on the part of any historian, is the inauguration of a Templar Order in Germany at the very moment when the so-called Scottish degrees were introduced into French Masonry. We shall now return to 1738 and follow events that were taking place at this important moment beyond the Rhine.

7. GERMAN TEMPLARISM AND FRENCH ILLUMINISM

The year after Ramsay's oration—that is to say in 1738—Frederick, Crown Prince of Prussia, the future Frederick the Great, who for two years had been carrying on a correspondence with Voltaire, suddenly evinced a curiosity to know the secrets of Freemasonry which he had hitherto derided as "Kinderspiel," and accordingly went through a hasty initiation during the night of August 14-15, whilst passing through Brunswick.³⁹⁷

The ceremony took place not at a masonic lodge, but at a hotel, in the presence of a deputation summoned by the Graf von Lippe-Bückeburg from Grand Lodge of Hamburg for the occasion. It is evident that something of an unusual kind must have occurred to necessitate these speedy and makeshift arrangements. Carlyle, in his account of the episode, endeavours to pass it off as a "very trifling circumstance"—a reason the more for regarding it as of the highest importance since we know now from facts that have recently come to light how carefully Carlyle was spoon-fed by Potsdam whilst writing his book on Frederick the Great.³⁹⁸

But let us follow Frederick's masonic career. In June 1740, after his accession to

the throne, his interest in Masonry had clearly not waned, for we find him presiding over a lodge at Charlottenburg, where he received into the Order two of his brothers, his brother-in-law, and Duke Frederick William of Holstein-Beck. At his desire the Baron de Bielfeld and his privy councillor Jordan founded a lodge at Berlin, the "Three Globes," which by 1746 had no less than fourteen lodges under its jurisdiction.

In this same year of 1740 Voltaire, in response to urgent invitations, paid his first visit to Frederick the Great in Germany. Voltaire is usually said not to have yet become a Mason, and the date of his initiation is supposed to have been 1778, when he was received into the *Loge des Neuf Soeurs* in Paris. But this by no means precludes the possibility that he had belonged to another masonic Order at an earlier date. At any rate, Voltaire's visit to Germany was followed by two remarkable events in the masonic world of France. The first of these was the institution of the additional degrees; the second—perhaps not wholly unconnected with the first—was the arrival in Paris of a masonic delegate from Germany named von Marschall, who brought with him instructions for a new or rather a revived Order of Templarism, in which he attempted to interest Prince Charles Edward and his followers.

Von Marschall was followed about two years later by Baron von Hunt, who had been initiated in 1741 into the three degrees of Craft Masonry in Germany and now came to consecrate a lodge in Paris. According to von Hundt's own account, he was then received into the Order of the Temple by an unknown Knight of the Red Plume, in the presence of Lord Kilmarnock,³⁹⁹ and was presented as a distinguished Brother to Prince Charles Edward, whom he imagined to be Grand Master of the Order.⁴⁰⁰ But all this was afterwards shown to be a pure fabrication, for Prince Charles Edward denied all knowledge of the affair, and von Hundt himself admitted later that he did not know the name of the lodge or chapter in which he was received, but that he was directed from "a hidden centre" and by Unknown Superiors, whose identity he was bound not to reveal.⁴⁰¹ In reality it appears that von Hundt's account was exactly the opposite of the truth,⁴⁰² and that it was von Hundt who, seconding von Marschall's effort, tried to enrol Prince Charles Edward in the new German Order by assuring him that he could raise powerful support for the Stuart cause under the cover of reorganizing the Templar Order, of which he claimed to possess the true secrets handed down from the Knights of the fourteenth century. By way of further rehabilitating the Order, von Hundt declared that all the accusations brought against it by Philippe le Bel and the Pope were based on false charges manufactured by two recreant Knights named Noffodei and Florian as a revenge for having been deprived of their commands by the Order in consequence of certain crimes they had committed.⁴⁰³ According to Lecouteulx de Canteleu, von Hundt eventually succeeded—after the defeat of Culloden—in persuading Prince Charles Edward to enter his Order. But

this is extremely doubtful. At any rate, when in 1751 von Hundt officially founded his new Templar Order under the name of the *Stricte Observance*, the unfortunate Charles Edward played no part at all in the scheme. As Mr. Gould has truly observed, "no trace of Jacobite intrigues ever blended with the teaching of the *Stricte Observance*."⁴⁰⁴

The *Order of the Stricte Observance* was in reality a purely German association composed of men drawn entirely from the intellectual and aristocratic classes, and, in imitation of the chivalric Orders of the past, known to each other under knightly titles. Thus Prince Charles of Hesse became Eques a Leone Resurgente, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick Eques a Victoria, the Prussian minister von Bischoffswerder Eques a Grypho, Baron de Wachter Eques a Ceraso, Christian Bode (Councillor of Legation in Saxe-Gotha) Eques a Lilio Convallium, von Haugwitz (Cabinet Minister of Frederick the Great) Eques a Monte Sancto, etc.

But according to the declarations of the Order the official leaders, Knights of the Moon, the Star, the Golden Sun, or of the Sacred Mountain, were simply figure-heads; the real leaders, known as the "Unknown Superiors," remained in the background, unadorned by titles of chivalry but exercising supreme jurisdiction over the Order. The system had been foreshadowed by the "Invisibles" of seventeenth-century Rosicrucianism; but now, instead of an intangible group whose very existence was only known vaguely to the world, there appeared in the light of day a powerful organization led apparently by men of influence and position yet secretly directed by hidden chiefs.⁴⁰⁵ Mirabeau has described the advent of these mysterious directors in the following passage:

In about 1756 there appeared, as if they had come out of the ground, men sent, they said, by unknown superiors, and armed with powers to reform the order [of Freemasonry] and re-establish it in its ancient purity. One of these missionaries, named Johnston, came to Weimar and Jena, where he established himself. He was received in the best way in the world by the brothers [Freemasons], who were lured by the hope of great secrets, of important discoveries which were never made known to them.⁴⁰⁶

Now, in the manuscripts of the Prince of Hesse published by Lecouteulx de Canteleu it is said that this man Johnston, or rather Johnson, who proclaimed himself to be "Grand Prior of the Order," was a Jew named Leicht or Leucht.⁴⁰⁷ Gould says that his real name was either Leucht or Becker, but that he professed to be an Englishman, although unable to speak the English language, hence his assumption of the name Johnson.⁴⁰⁸ Mr. Gould has described Johnson as a "consummate rogue and an unmitigated vagabond ... of almost repulsive demeanour and of no education, but gifted with boundless impudence and low cunning." Indeed, von Hundt himself, after enlisting Johnson's services, found him

too dangerous and declared him to be an adventurer. Johnson was thereupon arrested by von Hundt's friend the councillor von Pritsch, and thrown into the castle of Wartburg, where sudden death ended his career.

It is, however, improbable that Mirabeau could be right in indicating Johnson as one of the "Unknown Superiors," who were doubtless men of vaster conceptions than this adventurer appears to have been. Moreover, the manner of his end clearly proves that he occupied a subordinate position in the *Stricte Observance*.

Here, then, we have a very curious sequence of events which it may be well to recapitulate briefly in order to appreciate their full significance:

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